

Ten Days That Shook the World



John Reed

Ten Days That Shook the World Author: John Reed

Reed, John (1990-02-07) [1919]. Ten Days that Shook the World (1st ed.). Penguin Classics.

Reprinted by New Outlook Publishers. 2019

Front cover designed by Comrade Cody Fleenor

Copyright © 2019 New Outlook Publishers.; New York, New York

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review or scholarly journal

ISBN 978-0-359-34521-2

First Printing 2019



Ten Days That Shook the World

| | |
|---|-----|
| Preface | 4 |
| Notes and Explanations | 10 |
| Political Parties | 10 |
| Parliamentary Procedure | 13 |
| Popular Organisations | 14 |
| Central Committees | 16 |
| Other Organisations | 17 |
| Chronology and Spelling | 18 |
| Sources | 18 |
| Introduction | 19 |
| Preface | 19 |
| Chapter 1: Background | 26 |
| Footnotes | 37 |
| Cost of Other Necessities-(Rubles and Kopeks) | 40 |
| Chapter 2 The Coming Storm | 45 |
| Footnotes | 70 |
| Chapter 3 On the Eve | 95 |
| Footnotes | 126 |
| Chapter 4 The Fall of the Provisional Government | 134 |
| Footnotes | 170 |
| Chapter 5 Plunging Ahead | 178 |
| From The All-Russian Congress Of Soviets | 179 |
| To The Citizens Of The Russian Republic! | 181 |
| From The Municipal Duma | 188 |
| Proclamation To The Peoples And Governments Of All The Belligerent Nations. | 193 |
| Footnotes | 212 |

Preface

This book is a slice of intensified history--history as I saw it. It does not pretend to be anything but a detailed account of the November Revolution, when the Bolsheviki, at the head of the workers and soldiers, seized the state power of Russia and placed it in the hands of the Soviets.

Naturally most of it deals with "Red Petrograd," the capital and heart of the insurrection. But the reader must realize that what took place in Petrograd was almost exactly duplicated, with greater or lesser intensity, at different intervals of time, all over Russia.

In this book, the first of several which I am writing, I must confine myself to a chronicle of those events which I myself observed and experienced, and those supported by reliable evidence; preceded by two chapters briefly outlining the background and causes of the November Revolution. I am aware that these two chapters make difficult reading, but they are essential to an understanding of what follows.

Many questions will suggest themselves to the mind of the reader. What is Bolshevism? What kind of a governmental structure did the Bolsheviki set up? If the Bolsheviki championed the Constituent Assembly before the November Revolution, why did they disperse it by force of arms afterward? And if the bourgeoisie opposed the Constituent Assembly until the danger of Bolshevism became apparent, why did they champion it afterward?

These and many other questions cannot be answered here. In another volume, "Kornilov to Brest-Litovsk," I trace the course of the Revolution up to and including the German peace. There I explain the origin and functions of the Revolutionary organizations, the evolution of popular sentiment, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the structure of the Soviet state, and the course and outcome of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations.

In considering the rise of the Bolsheviki it is necessary to understand that Russian economic life and the Russian army was not

Ten Days That Shook the World

disorganized on November 7th, 1917, but many months before, as the logical result of a process which began as far back as 1915. The corrupt reactionaries in control of the Tsar's Court deliberately undertook to wreck Russia in order to make a separate peace with Germany. The lack of arms on the front, which had caused the great retreat of the summer of 1915, the lack of food in the army and in the great cities, the breakdown of manufactures and transportation in 1916--all these we know now were part of a gigantic campaign of sabotage. This was halted just in time by the March Revolution.

For the first few months of the new régime, in spite of the confusion incident upon a great Revolution, when one hundred and sixty millions of the world's most oppressed peoples suddenly achieved liberty, both the internal situation and the combative power of the army actually improved.

But the "honeymoon" was short. The propertied classes wanted merely a political revolution, which would take the power from the Tsar and give it to them. They wanted Russia to be a constitutional Republic, like France or the United States; or a constitutional Monarchy, like England. On the other hand, the masses of the people wanted real industrial and agrarian democracy.

William English Walling, in his book, "Russia's Message," an account of the Revolution of 1905, describes very well the state of mind of the Russian workers, who were later to support Bolshevism almost unanimously: They (the working people) saw it was possible that even under a free Government, if it fell into the hands of other social classes, they might still continue to starve.

The Russian workman is revolutionary, but he is neither violent, dogmatic, nor unintelligent. He is ready for barricades, but he has studied them, and alone of the workers of the world he has learned about them from actual experience. He is ready and willing to fight his oppressor, the capitalist class, to a finish. But he does not ignore the existence of other classes. He merely asks that the other classes take one side or the other in the bitter conflict that draws near.

They (the workers) were all agreed that our (American) political institutions were preferable to their own, but they were not very anxious to exchange one despot for another (i.e., the capitalist class).

The workingmen of Russia did not have themselves shot down,

John Reed

executed by hundreds in Moscow, Riga and Odessa, imprisoned by thousands in every Russian jail, and exiled to the deserts and the arctic regions, in exchange for the doubtful privileges of the workingmen of Goldfields and Cripple Creek.

And so developed in Russia, in the midst of a foreign war, the Social Revolution on top of the Political Revolution, culminating in the triumph of Bolshevism.

Mr. A. J. Sack, director in this country of the Russian Information Bureau, which opposes the Soviet Government, has this to say in his book, "The Birth of the Russian Democracy": The Bolsheviks organized their own cabinet, with Nicholas Lenine as Premier and Leon Trotsky-- Minister of Foreign Affairs. The inevitability of their coming into power became evident almost immediately after the March Revolution. The history of the Bolsheviks, after the Revolution, is a history of their steady growth.

Foreigners and Americans especially, frequently emphasize the "ignorance" of the Russian workers. It is true they lacked the political experience of the peoples of the West, but they were very well trained in voluntary organization. In 1917 there were more than twelve million members of the Russian consumers' Cooperative societies; and the Soviets themselves are a wonderful demonstration of their organizing genius. Moreover, there is probably not a people in the world so well educated in Socialist theory and its practical application.

William English Walling thus characterizes them:

The Russian working people are for the most part able to read and write. For many years the country has been in such a disturbed condition that they have had the advantage of leadership not only of intelligent individuals in their midst, but of a large part of the equally revolutionary educated class, who have turned to the working people with their ideas for the political and social regeneration of Russia.

Many writers explain their hostility to the Soviet Government by arguing that the last phase of the Russian Revolution was simply a struggle of the "respectable" elements against the brutal attacks of Bolshevism. However, it was the propertied classes, who, when they realized the growth in power of the popular revolutionary organisations, undertook to destroy them and to halt the Revolution. To this end the propertied classes finally resorted to desperate measures.

Ten Days That Shook the World

In order to wreck the Kerensky Ministry and the Soviets, transportation was disorganized and internal troubles provoked; to crush the Factory-Shop Committees, plants were shut down, and fuel and raw materials diverted; to break the Army Committees at the front, capital punishment was restored and military defeat connived at.

This was all excellent fuel for the Bolshevik fire. The Bolsheviks retorted by preaching the class war, and by asserting the supremacy of the Soviets.

Between these two extremes, with the other factions which whole-heartedly or half-heartedly supported them, were the so-called "moderate" Socialists, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, and several smaller parties. These groups were also attacked by the propertied classes, but their power of resistance was crippled by their theories.

Roughly, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries believed that Russia was not economically ripe for a social revolution--that only a political revolution was possible. According to their interpretation, the Russian masses were not educated enough to take over the power; any attempt to do so would inevitably bring on a reaction, by means of which some ruthless opportunist might restore the old régime. And so it followed that when the "moderate" Socialists were forced to assume the power, they were afraid to use it.

They believed that Russia must pass through the stages of political and economic development known to Western Europe, and emerge at last, with the rest of the world, into full-fledged Socialism. Naturally, therefore, they agreed with the propertied classes that Russia must first be a parliamentary state--though with some improvements on the Western democracies. As a consequence, they insisted upon the collaboration of the propertied classes in the Government.

From this it was an easy step to supporting them. The "moderate" Socialists needed the bourgeoisie. But the bourgeoisie did not need the "moderate" Socialists. So it resulted in the Socialist Ministers being obliged to give way, little by little, on their entire program, while the propertied classes grew more and more insistent.

And at the end, when the Bolsheviks upset the whole hollow

John Reed

compromise, the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries found themselves fighting on the side of the propertied classes. In almost every country in the world to-day the same phenomenon is visible. Instead of being a destructive force, it seems to me that the Bolsheviks were the only party in Russia with a constructive program and the power to impose it on the country. If they had not succeeded to the Government when they did, there is little doubt in my mind that the armies of Imperial Germany would have been in Petrograd and Moscow in December, and Russia would again be ridden by a Tsar.

It is still fashionable, after a whole year of the Soviet Government, to speak of the Bolshevik insurrection as an "adventure." Adventure it was, and one of the most marvelous mankind ever embarked upon, sweeping into history at the head of the toiling masses, and staking everything on their vast and simple desires. Already the machinery had been set up by which the land of the great estates could be distributed among the peasants. The Factory-Shop Committees and the Trade Unions were there to put into operation workers' control of industry. In every village, town, city, district and province there were Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, prepared to assume the task of local administration.

No matter what one thinks of Bolshevism, it is undeniable that the Russian Revolution is one of the great events of human history, and the rise of the Bolsheviks a phenomenon of world-wide importance. Just as historians search the records for the minutest details of the story of the Paris Commune, so they will want to know what happened in Petrograd in November, 1917, the spirit which animated the people, and how the leaders looked, talked and acted. It is with this in view that I have written this book.

In the struggle my sympathies were not neutral. But in telling the story of those great days I have tried to see events with the eye of a conscientious reporter, interested in setting down the truth.

J.R.
New York, January 1st 1919.

Ten Days That Shook the World



John Reed, as a teenager, later graduated Harvard University

John Reed
Notes and Explanations

To the average reader the multiplicity of Russian organizations--political groups, Committees and Central Committees, Soviets, Dumas and Unions--will prove extremely confusing. For this reason I am giving here a few brief definitions and explanations.

Political Parties

In the elections to the Constituent Assembly, there were seventeen tickets in Petrograd, and in some of the provincial towns as many as forty; but the following summary of the aims and composition of political parties is limited to the groups and factions mentioned in this book. Only the essence of their programmes and the general character of their constituencies can be noticed.

1. Monarchists, of various shades, Octobrists, etc. These once-powerful factions no longer existed openly; they either worked underground, or their members joined the Cadets, as the Cadets came by degrees to stand for their political programme. Representatives in this book, Rodzianko, Shulgin.

2. Cadets. So-called from the initials of its name, Constitutional Democrats. Its official name is "Party of the People's Freedom." Under the Tsar composed of Liberals from the propertied classes, the Cadets were the great party of political reform, roughly corresponding to the Progressive Party in America. When the Revolution broke out in March, 1917, the Cadets formed the first Provisional Government. The Cadet Ministry was overthrown in April because it declared itself in favour of Allied imperialistic aims, including the imperialistic aims of the Tsar's Government. As the Revolution became more and more a social economic Revolution, the Cadets grew more and more conservative. Its representatives in this book are: Miliukov, Vinaver, Shatsky.

2a. Group of Public Men. After the Cadets had become unpopular through their relations with the Kornilov counter-revolution, the Group of Public Men was formed in Moscow. Delegates from the Group of Public Men were given portfolios in the last Kerensky Cabinet. The Group declared itself non-partisan, although its intellectual leaders were men like Rodzianko and Shulgin. It was composed of the more "modern" bankers, merchants and manufacturers, who were intelligent

Ten Days That Shook the World

enough to realise that the Soviets must be fought by their own weapon--economic organisation. Typical of the Group: Lianozov, Konovalov.

3. Populist Socialists, or Trudoviki (Labour Group). Numerically a small party, composed of cautious intellectuals, the leaders of the Cooperative societies, and conservative peasants. Professing to be Socialists, the Populists really supported the interests of the petty bourgeoisie--clerks, shopkeepers, etc. By direct descent, inheritors of the compromising tradition of the Labour Group in the Fourth Imperial Duma, which was composed largely of peasant representatives. Kerensky was the leader of the Trudoviki in the Imperial Duma when the Revolution of March, 1917, broke out. The Populist Socialists are a nationalistic party. Their representatives in this book are: Peshekanov, Tchaikovsky.

4. Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Originally Marxian Socialists. At a party congress held in 1903, the party split, on the question of tactics, into two factions--the Majority (Bolshinstvo), and the Minority (Menshinstvo). From this sprang the names "Bolsheviki" and "Mensheviki"--"members of the majority" and "members of the minority." These two wings became two separate parties, both calling themselves "Russian Social Democratic Labour Party," and both professing to be Marxians. Since the Revolution of 1905 the Bolsheviki were really the minority, becoming again the majority in September, 1917.

a. Mensheviki. This party includes all shades of Socialists who believe that society must progress by natural evolution toward Socialism, and that the working-class must conquer political power first. Also a nationalistic party. This was the party of the Socialist intellectuals, which means: all the means of education having been in the hands of the propertied classes, the intellectuals instinctively reacted to their training, and took the side of the propertied classes. Among their representatives in this book are: Dan, Lieber, Tseretelli.

b. Mensheviki Internationalists. The radical wing of the Mensheviki, internationalists and opposed to all coalition with the propertied classes; yet unwilling to break loose from the conservative Mensheviki, and opposed to the dictatorship of the working-class advocated by the Bolsheviki. Trotzky was long a member of this group. Among their leaders: Martov, Martinov.

c. Bolsheviki. Now call themselves the Communist Party, in order to

John Reed

emphasise their complete separation from the tradition of “moderate” or “parliamentary” Socialism, which dominates the Mensheviks and the so-called Majority Socialists in all countries. The Bolsheviks proposed immediate proletarian insurrection, and seizure of the reins of Government, in order to hasten the coming of Socialism by forcibly taking over industry, land, natural resources and financial institutions. This party expresses the desires chiefly of the factory workers, but also of a large section of the poor peasants. The name “Bolshevik” can not be translated by “Maximalist.” The Maximalists are a separate group. (See paragraph 5b). Among the leaders: Lenin, Trotsky, Lunacharsky.

d. United Social Democrats Internationalists. Also called the Novaya Zhizn (New Life) group, from the name of the very influential newspaper which was its organ. A little group of intellectuals with a very small following among the working-class, except the personal following of Maxim Gorky, its leader. Intellectuals, with almost the same programme as the Menshevik Internationalists, except that the Novaya Zhizn group refused to be tied to either of the two great factions. Opposed the Bolshevik tactics, but remained in the Soviet Government. Other representatives in this book: Avilov, Kramarov.

e. Yedinstvo. A very small and dwindling group, composed almost entirely of the personal following of Plekhanov, one of the pioneers of the Russian Social Democratic movement in the 80's, and its greatest theoretician. Now an old man, Plekhanov was extremely patriotic, too conservative even for the Mensheviks. After the Bolshevik coup d'état, Yedinstvo disappeared.

5. Socialist Revolutionary party. Called Essaires from the initials of their name. Originally the revolutionary party of the peasants, the party of the Fighting Organisations--the Terrorists. After the March Revolution, it was joined by many who had never been Socialists. At that time it stood for the abolition of private property in land only, the owners to be compensated in some fashion. Finally the increasing revolutionary feeling of peasants forced the Essaires to abandon the “compensation” clause, and led to the younger and more fiery intellectuals breaking off from the main party in the fall of 1917 and forming a new party, the Left Socialist Revolutionary party. The Essaires, who were afterward always called by the radical groups “Right Socialist Revolutionaries,” adopted the political attitude of the Mensheviks, and worked together with them. They finally came to represent the wealthier peasants, the intellectuals, and the politically uneducated populations of remote rural districts. Among them there

Ten Days That Shook the World

was, however, a wider difference of shades of political and economic opinion than among the Mensheviks. Among their leaders mentioned in these pages: Avksentiev, Gotz, Kerensky, Tchernov, "Babuschka" Breshkovskaya.

a. Left Socialist Revolutionaries. Although theoretically sharing the Bolshevik programme of dictatorship of the working-class, at first were reluctant to follow the ruthless Bolshevik tactics. However, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries remained in the Soviet Government, sharing the Cabinet portfolios, especially that of Agriculture. They withdrew from the Government several times, but always returned. As the peasants left the ranks of the Essaires in increasing numbers, they joined the Left Socialist Revolutionary party, which became the great peasant party supporting the Soviet Government, standing for confiscation without compensation of the great landed estates, and their disposition by the peasants themselves. Among the leaders: Spiridonova, Karelin, Kamkov, Kalagayev.

b. Maximalists. An off-shoot of the Socialist Revolutionary party in the Revolution of 1905, when it was a powerful peasant movement, demanding the immediate application of the maximum Socialist programme. Now an insignificant group of peasant anarchists.

Parliamentary Procedure

Russian meetings and conventions are organised after the continental model rather than our own. The first action is usually the election of officers and the presidium.

The presidium is a presiding committee, composed of representatives of the groups and political factions represented in the assembly, in proportion to their numbers. The presidium arranges the Order of Business, and its members can be called upon by the President to take the chair pro tem.

Each question (vopros) is stated in a general way and then debated, and at the close of the debate resolutions are submitted by the different factions, and each one voted on separately. The Order of Business can be, and usually is, smashed to pieces in the first half hour. On the plea of "emergency," which the crowd almost always grants, anybody from the floor can get up and say anything on any subject. The crowd controls the meeting, practically the only functions of the speaker being to keep order by ringing a little bell, and to recognize speakers. Almost all the real work of the session is done in caucuses of

John Reed

the different groups and political factions, which almost always cast their votes in a body and are represented by floor-leaders. The result is, however, that at every important new point, or vote, the session takes a recess to enable the different groups and political factions to hold a caucus.

The crowd is extremely noisy, cheering or heckling speakers, over-riding the plans of the presidium. Among the customary cries are: "Prosim! Please! Go on!" "Pravilno!" or "Eto vierno! That's true! Right!" "Do volno! Enough!" "Doloi! Down with him!" "Posor! Shame!" and "Teesche! Silence! Not so noisy!"

Popular Organisations

1. Soviet. The word soviet means "council." Under the Tsar the Imperial Council of State was called Gosudarstvennyi Soviet. Since the Revolution, however, the term Soviet has come to be associated with a certain type of parliament elected by members of working-class economic organizations--the Soviet of Workers', of Soldiers', or of Peasants' Deputies. I have therefore limited the word to these bodies, and wherever else it occurs I have translated it "Council."

Besides the local Soviets, elected in every city, town and village of Russia--and in large cities, also Ward (Raionny) Soviets--there are also the oblastne or gubernsky (district or provincial) Soviets, and the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets in the capital, called from its initials Tsay-ee-kah. (See below, "Central Committees").

Almost everywhere the Soviets of Workers' and of Soldiers' Deputies combined very soon after the March Revolution. In special matters concerning their peculiar interests, however, the Workers' and the Soldiers' Sections continued to meet separately. The Soviets of Peasants' Deputies did not join the other two until after the Bolshevik coup d'etat. They, too, were organised like the workers and soldiers, with an Executive Committee of the All-Russian Peasants' Soviets in the capital.

2. Trade Unions. Although mostly industrial in form, the Russian labour unions were still called Trade Unions, and at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution had from three to four million members. These Unions were also organised in an All-Russian body, a sort of Russian Federation of Labour, which had its Central Executive Committee in the capital.

3. Factory-Shop Committees. These were spontaneous organisations

Ten Days That Shook the World

created in the factories by the workers in their attempt to control industry, taking advantage of the administrative break-down incident upon the Revolution. Their function was by revolutionary action to take over and run the factories. The Factory-Shop Committees also had their All-Russian organization, with a Central Committee at Petrograd, which co-operated with the Trade Unions.

4. Dumas. The word *duma* means roughly “deliberative body.” The old Imperial Duma, which persisted six months after the Revolution, in a democratized form, died a natural death in September, 1917. The City Duma referred to in this book was the reorganized Municipal Council, often called “Municipal Self-Government.” It was elected by direct and secret ballot, and its only reason for failure to hold the masses during the Bolshevik Revolution was the general decline in influence of all purely political representation in the fact of the growing power of organizations based on economic groups.

5. Zemstvos. May be roughly translated “county councils.” Under the Tsar semi-political, semi-social bodies with very little administrative power, developed and controlled largely by intellectual Liberals among the land-owning classes. Their most important function was education and social service among the peasants. During the war the Zemstvos gradually took over the entire feeding and clothing of the Russian Army, as well as the buying from foreign countries, and work among the soldiers generally corresponding to the work of the American Y. M. C. A. at the Front. After the March Revolution the Zemstvos were democratized, with a view to making them the organs of local government in the rural districts. But like the City Dumas, they could not compete with the Soviets.

6. Cooperatives. These were the workers’ and peasants’ Consumers’ Cooperative societies, which had several million members all over Russia before the Revolution. Founded by Liberals and “moderate” Socialists, the Cooperative movement was not supported by the revolutionary Socialist groups, because it was a substitute for the complete transference of means of production and distribution into the hands of the workers. After the March Revolution the Cooperatives spread rapidly, and were dominated by Populist Socialists, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, and acted as a conservative political force until the Bolshevik Revolution. However, it was the Cooperatives which fed Russia when the old structure of commerce and transportation collapsed.

John Reed

7. Army Committees. The Army Committees were formed by the soldiers at the front to combat the reactionary influence of the old regime officers. Every company, regiment, brigade, division and corps had its committee, over all of which was elected the Army Committee. The Central Army Committee cooperated with the General Staff. The administrative break-down in the army incident upon the Revolution threw upon the shoulders of the Army Committees most of the work of the Quartermaster's Department, and in some cases, even the command of troops.

8. Fleet Committees. The corresponding organisations in the Navy.

Central Committees

In the spring and summer of 1917, All-Russian conventions of every sort of organisation were held at Petrograd. There were national congresses of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Soviets, Trade Unions, Factory-Shop Committees, Army and Fleet Committees--besides every branch of the military and naval service, Cooperatives, Nationalities, etc. Each of these conventions elected a Central Committee, or a Central Executive Committee, to guard its particular interests at the seat of Government. As the Provisional Government grew weaker, these Central Committees were forced to assume more and more administrative powers.

The most important Central Committees mentioned in this book are:

Union of Unions. During the Revolution of 1905, Professor Miliukov and other Liberals established unions of professional men--doctors, lawyers, physicians, etc. These were united under one central organisation, the Union of Unions. In 1905 the Union of Unions acted with the revolutionary democracy; in 1917, however, the Union of Unions opposed the Bolshevik uprising, and united the Government employees who went on strike against the authority of the Soviets.

Tsay-ee-kah. All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. So called from the initials of its name.

Tsentroflot. "Centre-Fleet"--the Central Fleet Committee.

Vikzhel. All-Russian Central Committee of the Railway Workers' Union. So called from the initials of its name.

Ten Days That Shook the World **Other Organisations**

Red Guards. The armed factory workers of Russia. The Red Guards were first formed during the Revolution of 1905, and sprang into existence again in the days of March, 1917, when a force was needed to keep order in the city. At that time they were armed, and all efforts of the Provisional Government to disarm them were more or less unsuccessful. At every great crisis in the Revolution the Red Guards appeared on the streets, untrained and undisciplined, but full of Revolutionary zeal.

White Guards. Bourgeois volunteers, who emerged in the last stages of the Revolution, to defend private property from the Bolshevik attempt to abolish it. A great many of them were University students.

Tekhintsi. The so-called "Savage Division" in the army, made up of Mohametan tribesmen from Central Asia, and personally devoted to General Kornilov. The Tekhintsi were noted for their blind obedience and their savage cruelty in warfare.

Death Battalions. Or Shock Battalions. The Women's Battalion is known to the world as the Death Battalion, but there were many Death Battalions composed of men. These were formed in the summer of 1917 by Kerensky, for the purpose of strengthening the discipline and combative fire of the army by heroic example. The Death Battalions were composed mostly of intense young patriots. These came for the most part from among the sons of the propertied classes.

Union of Officers. An organisation formed among the reactionary officers in the army to combat politically the growing power of the Army Committees.

Knights of St. George. The Cross of St. George was awarded for distinguished action in battle. Its holder automatically became a "Knight of St. George." The predominant influence in the organization was that of the supporters of the military idea.

Peasants' Union. In 1905, the Peasants' Union was a revolutionary peasants' organization. In 1917, however, it had become the political expression of the more prosperous peasants, to fight the growing power and revolutionary aims of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

John Reed
Chronology and Spelling

I have adopted in this book our Calendar throughout, instead of the former Russian Calendar, which was thirteen days earlier.

In the spelling of Russian names and words, I have made no attempt to follow any scientific rules for transliteration, but have tried to give the spelling which would lead the English-speaking reader to the simplest approximation of their pronunciation.

Sources

Much of the material in this book is from my own notes. I have also relied, however, upon a heterogeneous file of several hundred assorted Russian newspapers, covering almost every day of the time described, of files of the English paper, the Russian Daily News, and of the two French papers, Journal de Russie and Entente. But far more valuable than these is the Bulletin de la Presse issued daily by the French Information Bureau in Petrograd, which reports all important happenings, speeches and the comment of the Russian press. Of this I have an almost complete file from the spring of 1917 to the end of January, 1918.

Besides the foregoing, I have in my possession almost every proclamation, decree and announcement posted on the walls of Petrograd from the middle of September, 1917, to the end of January, 1918. Also the official publication of all Government decrees and orders, and the official Government publication of the secret treaties and other documents discovered in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when the Bolsheviki took it over.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Introduction

With the greatest interest and with never slackening attention I read John Reed's book, Ten Days that Shook the World. Unreservedly do I recommend it to the workers of the world. Here is a book which I should like to see published in millions of copies and translated into all languages. It gives a truthful and most vivid exposition of the events so significant to the comprehension of what really is the Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. These problems are widely discussed, but before one can accept or reject these ideas, he must understand the full significance of his decision. John Reed's book will undoubtedly help to clear this question, which is the fundamental problem of the international labor movement.

N. LENIN.
End of 1919.

Preface

THIS book is a slice of intensified history—history as I saw it. It does not pretend to be anything but a detailed account of the November Revolution, when the Bolsheviki, at the head of the workers and soldiers, seized the state power of Russia and placed it in the hands of the Soviets.

Naturally most of it deals with “Red Petrograd,” the capital and heart of the insurrection. But the reader must realize that what took place in Petrograd was almost exactly duplicated, with greater or lesser intensity, at different intervals of time, all over Russia.

In this book, the first of several which I am writing, I must confine myself to a chronicle of those events which I myself observed and experienced, and those supported by reliable evidence; preceded by two chapters briefly outlining the background and causes of the November Revolution. I am aware that these two chapters make difficult reading, but they are essential to an understanding of what follows.

Many questions will suggest themselves to the mind of the reader. What is Bolshevism? What kind of a governmental structure did the Bolsheviki set up? If the Bolsheviki championed the Constituent Assembly before the November Revolution, why did they disperse it by force of arms afterward? And if the bourgeoisie opposed the Constituent Assembly until the danger of Bolshevism became apparent, why did they champion it afterward?

These and many other questions cannot be answered here. In another volume, “Kornilov to Brest-Litovsk,” I trace the course of the Revolution up to and including the German peace. There I explain the origin and functions of the Revolutionary organisations, the evolution of popular sentiment, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the structure of the Soviet state, and the course and outcome of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations.

In considering the rise of the Bolsheviki it is necessary to understand that Russian economic life and the Russian army were not disorganised on November 7th, 1917, but many months before, as the

Ten Days That Shook the World

logical result of a process which began as far back as 1915. The corrupt reactionaries in control of the Tsar's Court deliberately undertook to wreck Russia in order to make a separate peace with Germany. The lack of arms on the front, which had caused the great retreat of the summer of 1915, the lack of food in the army and in the great cities, the breakdown of manufactures and transportation in 1916—all these we know now were part of a gigantic campaign of sabotage. This was halted just in time by the March Revolution.

For the first few months of the new régime, in spite of the confusion incident upon a great Revolution, when one hundred and sixty millions of the world's most oppressed peoples suddenly achieved liberty, both the internal situation and the combative power of the army actually improved.

But the "honeymoon" was short. The propertied classes wanted merely a political revolution, which would take the power from the Tsar and give it to them. They wanted Russia to be a constitutional Republic, like France or the United States; or a constitutional Monarchy, like England. On the other hand, the masses of the people wanted real industrial and agrarian democracy.

William English Walling, in his book, "Russia's Message," an account of the Revolution of 1905, describes very well the state of mind of the Russian workers, who were later to support Bolshevism almost unanimously:

They (the working people) saw it was possible that even under a free Government, if it fell into the hands of other social classes, they might still continue to starve.

The Russian workman is revolutionary, but he is neither violent, dogmatic, nor unintelligent. He is ready for barricades, but he has studied them, and alone of the workers of the world he has learned about them from actual experience. He is ready and willing to fight his oppressor, the capitalist class, to a finish. But he does not ignore the existence of other classes. He merely asks that the other classes take one side or the other in the bitter conflict that draws near.

They (the workers) were all agreed that our (American) political institutions were preferable to their own, but they were not very anxious to exchange one despot for another (i.e., the capitalist class).

John Reed

The workingmen of Russia did not have themselves shot down, executed by hundreds in Moscow, Riga and Odessa, imprisoned by thousands in every Russian jail, and exiled to the deserts and the arctic regions, in exchange for the doubtful privileges of the workingmen of Goldfields and Cripple Creek.

And so developed in Russia, in the midst of a foreign war, the Social Revolution on top of the Political Revolution, culminating in the triumph of Bolshevism.

Mr. A. J. Sack, director in this country of the Russian Information Bureau, which opposes the Soviet Government, has this to say in his book, "The Birth of the Russian Democracy".

The Bolsheviks organized their own cabinet, with Nicholas Lenine as Premier and Leon Trotzky—Minister of Foreign Affairs. The inevitability of their coming into power became evident almost immediately after the March Revolution. The history of the Bolsheviks, after the Revolution, is a history of their steady growth....

Foreigners, and Americans especially, frequently emphasize the "ignorance" of the Russian workers. It is true they lacked the political experience of the peoples of the West, but they were very well trained in voluntary organization. In 1917 there were more than twelve million members of the Russian consumers' Cooperative societies; and the Soviets themselves are a wonderful demonstration of their organizing genius. Moreover, there is probably not a people in the world so well educated in Socialist theory and its practical application.

William English Walling thus characterizes them:

The Russian working people are for the most part able to read and write. For many years the country has been in such a disturbed condition that they have had the advantage of leadership not only of intelligent individuals in their midst, but of a large part of the equally revolutionary educated class, who have turned to the working people with their ideas for the political and social regeneration of Russia....

Many writers explain their hostility to the Soviet Government by arguing that the last phase of the Russian Revolution was simply a struggle of the "respectable" elements against the brutal attacks of Bolshevism. However, it was the propertied classes, who, when they

Ten Days That Shook the World

realized the growth in power of the popular revolutionary organizations, undertook to destroy them and to halt the Revolution. To this end the propertied classes finally resorted to desperate measures. In order to wreck the Kerensky Ministry and the Soviets, transportation was disorganized and internal troubles provoked; to crush the Factory-Shop Committees, plants were shut down, and fuel and raw materials diverted; to break the Army Committees at the front, capital punishment was restored and military defeat connived at.

This was all excellent fuel for the Bolshevik fire. The Bolsheviks retorted by preaching the class war, and by asserting the supremacy of the Soviets.

Between these two extremes, with the other factions which whole-heartedly or half-heartedly supported them, were the so-called “moderate” Socialists, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, and several smaller parties. These groups were also attacked by the propertied classes, but their power of resistance was crippled by their theories.

Roughly, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries believed that Russia was not economically ripe for a social revolution—that only a political revolution was possible. According to their interpretation, the Russian masses were not educated enough to take over the power; any attempt to do so would inevitably bring on a reaction, by means of which some ruthless opportunist might restore the old régime. And so it followed that when the “moderate” Socialists were forced to assume the power, they were afraid to use it.

They believed that Russia must pass through the stages of political and economic development known to Western Europe, and emerge at last, with the rest of the world, into full-fledged Socialism. Naturally, therefore, they agreed with the propertied classes that Russia must first be a parliamentary state—though with some improvements on the Western democracies. As a consequence, they insisted upon the collaboration of the propertied classes in the Government.

From this it was an easy step to supporting them. The “moderate” Socialists needed the bourgeoisie. But the bourgeoisie did not need the “moderate” Socialists. So it resulted in the Socialist

John Reed

Ministers being obliged to give way, little by little, on their entire program, while the propertied classes grew more and more insistent.

And at the end, when the Bolsheviks upset the whole hollow compromise, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries found themselves fighting on the side of the propertied classes.... In almost every country in the world to-day the same phenomenon is visible.

Instead of being a destructive force, it seems to me that the Bolsheviks were the only party in Russia with a constructive program and the power to impose it on the country. If they had not succeeded to the Government when they did, there is little doubt in my mind that the armies of Imperial Germany would have been in Petrograd and Moscow in December, and Russia would again be ridden by a Tsar....

It is still fashionable, after a whole year of the Soviet Government, to speak of the Bolshevik insurrection as an "adventure." Adventure it was, and one of the most marvelous mankind ever embarked upon, sweeping into history at the head of the toiling masses, and staking everything on their vast and simple desires. Already the machinery had been set up by which the land of the great estates could be distributed among the peasants. The Factory-Shop Committees and the Trade Unions were there to put into operation workers' control of industry. In every village, town, city, district and province there were Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, prepared to assume the task of local administration.

No matter what one thinks of Bolshevism, it is undeniable that the Russian Revolution is one of the great events of human history, and the rise of the Bolsheviks a phenomenon of world-wide importance. Just as historians search the records for the minutest details of the story of the Paris Commune, so they will want to know what happened in Petrograd in November, 1917, the spirit which animated the people, and how the leaders looked, talked and acted. It is with this in view that I have written this book.

In the struggle my sympathies were not neutral. But in telling the story of those great days I have tried to see events with the eye of a conscientious reporter, interested in setting down the truth.

J. R.
New York, January 1st 1919.

Ten Days That Shook the World



John Reed
Chapter 1: Background

TOWARD the end of September, 1917, an alien Professor of Sociology visiting Russia came to see me in Petrograd. He had been informed by businessmen and intellectuals that the Revolution was slowing down. The Professor wrote an article about it, and then travelled around the country, visiting factory towns and peasant communities-where, to his astonishment, the Revolution seemed to be speeding up. Among the wage-earners and the land-working people it was common to hear talk of "all land to the peasants, all factories to the workers." If the Professor had visited the front, he would have heard the whole Army talking Peace.

The Professor was puzzled, but he need not have been; both observations were correct. The property-owning classes were becoming more conservative, the masses of the people more radical.

There was a feeling among businessmen and the intelligentsia generally that the Revolution had gone quite far enough, and lasted too long; that things should settle down. This sentiment was shared by the dominant "moderate" Socialist groups, the oborontsi[1] Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, who supported the Provisional Government of Kerensky.

On October 14th the official organ of the "moderate" Socialists said: The drama of Revolution has two acts; the destruction of the old régime and the creation of the new one. The first act has lasted long enough. Now it is time to go on to the second, and to play it as rapidly as possible. As a great revolutionist put it, "Let us hasten, friends, to terminate the Revolution. He who makes it last too long will not gather the fruits."

Among the worker, soldier and peasant masses, however, there was a stubborn feeling that the "first act" was not yet played out. On the front the Army Committees were always running foul of officers who could not get used to treating their men like human beings; in the rear the Land Committees elected by the peasants were being jailed for trying to carry out Government regulations concerning the land; and the workmen[2] in the factories were fighting blacklists and lockouts. Nay, furthermore, returning political exiles were being excluded from the country as "undesirable" citizens; and in some cases, men who returned

Ten Days That Shook the World

from abroad to their villages were prosecuted and imprisoned for revolutionary acts committed in 1905.

To the multiform discontent of the people the “moderate” Socialists had one answer: Wait for the Constituent Assembly, which is to meet in December. But the masses were not satisfied with that. The Constituent Assembly was all well and good; but there were certain definite things for which the Russian Revolution had been made, and for which the revolutionary martyrs rotted in their stark Brotherhood Grave on Mars Field, that must be achieved Constituent Assembly or no Constituent Assembly: Peace, Land, and Workers’ Control of Industry. The Constituent Assembly had been postponed and postponed-would probably be postponed again, until the people were calm enough-perhaps to modify their demands! At any rate, here were eight months of the Revolution gone, and little enough to show for it.

Meanwhile the soldiers began to solve the peace question by simply deserting, the peasants burned manor-houses and took over the great estates, the workers sabotaged and struck-. Of course, as was natural, the manufacturers, land-owners and army officers exerted all their influence against any democratic compromise.

The policy of the Provisional Government alternated between ineffective reforms and stern repressive measures. An edict from the Socialist Minister of Labour ordered all the Workers’ Committees henceforth to meet only after working hours. Among the troops at the front, “agitators” of opposition political parties were arrested, radical newspapers closed down, and capital punishment applied-to revolutionary propagandists. Attempts were made to disarm the Red Guard. Cossacks were sent to keep order in the provinces.

These measures were supported by the “moderate” Socialists and their leaders in the Ministry, who considered it necessary to cooperate with the propertied classes. The people rapidly deserted them, and went over to the Bolsheviki, who stood for Peace, Land, and Workers’ Control of Industry, and a Government of the working-class. In September, 1917, matters reached a crisis. Against the overwhelming sentiment of the country, Kerensky and the “moderate” Socialists succeeded in establishing a Government of Coalition with the propertied classes; and as a result, the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries lost the confidence of the people forever.

John Reed

An article in Rabotchi Put (Workers' Way) about the middle of October, entitled "The Socialist Ministers," expressed the feeling of the masses of the people against the "moderate" Socialists:

Here is a list of their services. [3]

Tseretelli: disarmed the workmen with the assistance of General Polovtsev, checkmated the revolutionary soldiers, and approved of capital punishment in the army.

Skobeliev: commenced by trying to tax the capitalists 100% of their profits, and finished-and finished by an attempt to dissolve the Workers' Committees in the shops and factories.

Avksentiev: put several hundred peasants in prison, members of the Land Committees, and suppressed dozens of workers' and soldiers' newspapers.

Tchernov: signed the "Imperial" manifest, ordering the dissolution of the Finnish Diet.

Savinkov: concluded an open alliance with General Kornilov. If this saviour of the country was not able to betray Petrograd, it was due to reasons over which he had no control.

Zarudny: with the sanction of Alexinsky and Kerensky, put some of the best workers of the Revolution, soldiers and sailors, in prison. Nikitin: acted as a vulgar policeman against the Railway Workers. Kerensky: it is better not to say anything about him. The list of his services is too long.

A Congress of delegates of the Baltic Fleet, at Helsingfors, passed a resolution which began as follows:

We demand the immediate removal from the ranks of the Provisional Government of the "Socialist," the political adventurer-Kerensky, as one who is scandalising and ruining the great Revolution, and with it the revolutionary masses, by his shameless political blackmail on behalf of the bourgeoisie.

The direct result of all this was the rise of the Bolsheviki.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Since March, 1917, when the roaring torrents of workmen and soldiers beating upon the Tauride Palace compelled the reluctant Imperial Duma to assume the supreme power in Russia, it was the masses of the people, workers, soldiers and peasants, which forced every change in the course of the Revolution. They hurled the Miliukov Ministry down; it was their Soviet which proclaimed to the world the Russian peace terms—"No annexations, no indemnities, and the right of self-determination of peoples"; and again, in July, it was the spontaneous rising of the unorganized proletariat which once more stormed the Tauride Palace, to demand that the Soviets take over the Government of Russia.

The Bolsheviki, then a small political sect, put themselves at the head of the movement. As a result of the disastrous failure of the rising, public opinion turned against them, and their leaderless hordes slunk back into the Viborg Quarter, which is Petrograd's St. Antoine. Then followed a savage hunt of the Bolsheviki; hundreds were imprisoned, among them Trotzky, Madame Kollontai and Kameniev; Lenin and Zinoviev went into hiding, fugitives from justice; the Bolshevik papers were suppressed. Provocators and reactionaries raised the cry that the Bolsheviki were German agents, until people all over the world believed it.

But the Provisional Government found itself unable to substantiate its accusations; the documents proving pro-German conspiracy were discovered to be forgeries; 333 and one by one the Bolsheviki were released from prison without trial, on nominal or no bail-until only six remained. The impotence and indecision of the ever-changing Provisional Government was an argument nobody could refute. The Bolsheviki raised again the slogan so dear to the masses, "All Power to the Soviets!"-and they were not merely self-seeking, for at that time the majority of the Soviets was "moderate" Socialist, their bitter enemy.

But more potent still, they took the crude, simple desires of the workers, soldiers and peasants, and from them built their immediate programme. And so, while the oborontsi Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries involved themselves in compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Bolsheviki rapidly captured the Russian masses. In July they were hunted and despised; by September the metropolitan workmen, the sailors of the Baltic Fleet, and the soldiers, had been won almost entirely to their cause. The September municipal elections in the large cities[4]were significant; only 18 per cent of the returns were

John Reed

Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary, against more than 70 percent in June.

There remains a phenomenon which puzzled foreign observers: the fact that the Central Executive Committees of the Soviets, the Central Army and Fleet Committees,[2] and the Central Committees of some of the Unions-notably, the Post and Telegraph Workers and the Railway Workers-opposed the Bolsheviki with the utmost violence. These Central Committees had all been elected in the middle of the summer, or even before, when the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries had an enormous following; and they delayed or prevented any new elections. Thus, according to the constitution of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the All-Russian Congress should have been called in September; but the Tsay-ee-kah[2] would not call the meeting, on the ground that the Constituent Assembly was only two months away, at which time, they hinted, the Soviets would abdicate. Meanwhile, one by one, the Bolsheviki were winning in the local Soviets all over the country, in the Union branches and the ranks of the soldiers and sailors. The Peasants' Soviets remained still conservative, because in the sluggish rural districts political consciousness developed slowly, and the Socialist Revolutionary party had been for a generation the party which had agitated among the peasants-. But even among the peasants a revolutionary wing was forming. It showed itself clearly in October, when the left wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries split off, and formed a new political faction, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries.

At the same time there were signs everywhere that the forces of reaction were gaining confidence. [5] At the Troitsky Farce theatre in Petrograd, for example, a burlesque called Sins of the Tsar was interrupted by a group of Monarchists, who threatened to lynch the actors for "insulting the Emperor." Certain newspapers began to sigh for a "Russian Napoleon." It was the usual thing among bourgeois intelligentsia to refer to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies (Rabotchikh Deputatov) as Sabatchikh Deputatov-Dogs' Deputies.

On October 15th I had a conversation with a great Russian capitalist, Stepan Georgevitch Lianozov, known as the "Russian Rockefeller"-a Cadet by political faith.

"Revolution," he said, "is a sickness. Sooner or later the foreign powers must intervene here-as one would intervene to cure a sick child, and teach it how to walk. Of course it would be more or less improper,

Ten Days That Shook the World

but the nations must realise the danger of Bolshevism in their own countries-such contagious ideas as 'proletarian dictatorship,' and 'world social revolution'- There is a chance that this intervention may not be necessary. Transportation is demoralised, the factories are closing down, and the Germans are advancing. Starvation and defeat may bring the Russian people to their senses-."

Mr. Lianozov was emphatic in his opinion that whatever happened, it would be impossible for merchants and manufacturers to permit the existence of the workers' Shop Committees, or to allow the workers any share in the management of industry.

"As for the Bolsheviki, they will be done away with by one of two methods. The Government can evacuate Petrograd, then a state of siege declared, and the military commander of the district can deal with these gentlemen without legal formalities-. Or if, for example, the Constituent Assembly manifests any Utopian tendencies, it can be dispersed by force of arms-."

Winter was coming on-the terrible Russian winter. I heard businessmen speak of it so: "Winter was always Russia's best friend. Perhaps now it will rid us of Revolution." On the freezing front miserable armies continued to starve and die, without enthusiasm. The railways were breaking down, food lessening, factories closing. The desperate masses cried out that the bourgeoisie was sabotaging the life of the people, causing defeat on the Front. Riga had been surrendered just after General Kornilov said publicly, "Must we pay with Riga the price of bringing the country to a sense of its duty?"[3]

To Americans it is incredible that the class war should develop to such a pitch. But I have personally met officers on the Northern Front who frankly preferred military disaster to cooperation with the Soldiers' Committees. The secretary of the Petrograd branch of the Cadet party told me that the break-down of the country's economic life was part of a campaign to discredit the Revolution. An Allied diplomat, whose name I promised not to mention, confirmed this from his own knowledge. I know of certain coal-mines near Kharkov which were fired and flooded by their owners, of textile factories at Moscow whose engineers put the machinery out of order when they left, of railroad officials caught by the workers in the act of crippling locomotives.

A large section of the propertied classes preferred the Germans to the Revolution-even to the Provisional Government-and didn't

John Reed

hesitate to say so. In the Russian household where I lived, the subject of conversation at the dinner table was almost invariably the coming of the Germans, bringing "law and order."- One evening I spent at the house of a Moscow merchant; during tea we asked the eleven people at the table whether they preferred "Wilhelm or the Bolsheviki." The vote was ten to one for Wilhelm.

The speculators took advantage of the universal disorganization to pile up fortunes, and to spend them in fantastic revelry or the corruption of Government officials. Foodstuffs and fuel were hoarded, or secretly sent out of the country to Sweden. In the first four months of the Revolution, for example, the reserve food-supplies were almost openly looted from the great Municipal warehouses of Petrograd, until the two-years' provision of grain had fallen to less than enough to feed the city for one month-. According to the official report of the last Minister of Supplies in the Provisional Government, coffee was bought wholesale in Vladivostok for two rubles a pound, and the consumer in Petrograd paid thirteen. In all the stores of the large cities were tons of food and clothing; but only the rich could buy them.

In a provincial town I knew a merchant family turned speculator-maradior (bandit, ghou) the Russians call it. The three sons had bribed their way out of military service. One gambled in foodstuffs. Another sold illegal gold from the Lena mines to mysterious parties in Finland. The third owned a controlling interest in a chocolate factory, which supplied the local Cooperative societies-on condition that the Cooperatives furnished him everything he needed. And so, while the masses of the people got a quarter pound of black bread on their bread cards, he had an abundance of white bread, sugar, tea, candy, cake and butter-. Yet when the soldiers at the front could no longer fight from cold, hunger and exhaustion, how indignantly did this family scream "Cowards!"-how "ashamed" they were "to be Russians"- When finally the Bolsheviki found and requisitioned vast hoarded stores of provisions, what "Robbers" they were.

Beneath all this external rottenness moved the old-time Dark Forces, unchanged since the fall of Nicholas the Second, secret still and very active. The agents of the notorious Okhrana still functioned, for and against the Tsar, for and against Kerensky-whoever would pay-. In the darkness, underground organisations of all sorts, such as the Black Hundreds, were busy attempting to restore reaction in some form or other.

Ten Days That Shook the World

In this atmosphere of corruption, of monstrous half-truths, one clear note sounded day after day, the deepening chorus of the Bolsheviks, "All Power to the Soviets! All power to the direct representatives of millions on millions of common workers, soldiers, peasants. Land, bread, an end to the senseless war, an end to secret diplomacy, speculation, treachery-. The Revolution is in danger, and with it the cause of the people all over the world!"

The struggle between the proletariat and the middle class, between the Soviets and the Government, which had begun in the first March days, was about to culminate. Having at one bound leaped from the Middle Ages into the twentieth century, Russia showed the startled world two systems of Revolution-the political and the social-in mortal combat.

What a revelation of the vitality of the Russian Revolution, after all these months of starvation and disillusionment! The bourgeoisie should have better known its Russia. Not for a long time in Russia will the "sickness" of Revolution have run its course.

Looking back, Russia before the November insurrection seems of another age, almost incredibly conservative. So quickly did we adapt ourselves to the newer, swifter life; just as Russian politics swung bodily to the Left-until the Cadets were outlawed as "enemies of the people," Kerensky became a "counter-revolutionist," the "middle" Socialist leaders, Tseretelli, Dan, Lieber, Gotz and Avksentiev, were too reactionary for their following, and men like Victor Tchernov, and even Maxim Gorky, belonged to the Right Wing.

About the middle of December, 1917, a group of Socialist Revolutionary leaders paid a private visit to Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, and implored him not to mention the fact that they had been there, because they were "considered too far Right."

"And to think," said Sir George. "One year ago my Government instructed me not to receive Miliukov, because he was so dangerously Left!"

September and October are the worst months of the Russian year-especially the Petrograd year. Under dull grey skies, in the shortening days, the rain fell drenching, incessant. The mud underfoot was deep, slippery and clinging, tracked everywhere by heavy boots, and worse than usual because of the complete break-down of the

John Reed

Municipal administration. Bitter damp winds rushed in from the Gulf of Finland, and the chill fog rolled through the streets. At night, for motives of economy as well as fear of Zeppelins, the street-lights were few and far between; in private dwellings and apartment-houses the electricity was turned on from six o'clock until midnight, with candles forty cents apiece and little kerosene to be had. It was dark from three in the afternoon to ten in the morning. Robberies and housebreakings increased. In apartment houses the men took turns at all-night guard duty, armed with loaded rifles. This was under the Provisional Government.

Week by week food became scarcer. The daily allowance of bread fell from a pound and a half to a pound, then three quarters, half, and a quarter-pound. Toward the end there was a week without any bread at all. Sugar one was entitled to at the rate of two pounds a month-if one could get it at all, which was seldom. A bar of chocolate or a pound of tasteless candy cost anywhere from seven to ten rubles-at least a dollar. There was milk for about half the babies in the city; most hotels and private houses never saw it for months. In the fruit season apples and pears sold for a little less than a ruble apiece on the street-corner.

For milk and bread and sugar and tobacco one had to stand in queue long hours in the chill rain. Coming home from an all-night meeting I have seen the kvost (tail) beginning to form before dawn, mostly women, some with babies in their arms-. Carlyle, in his French Revolution, has described the French people as distinguished above all others by their faculty of standing in queue. Russia had accustomed herself to the practice, begun in the reign of Nicholas the Blessed as long ago as 1915, and from then continued intermittently until the summer of 1917, when it settled down as the regular order of things. Think of the poorly-clad people standing on the iron-white streets of Petrograd whole days in the Russian winter! I have listened in the bread-lines, hearing the bitter, acrid note of discontent which from time to time burst up through the miraculous good nature of the Russian crowd.

Of course all the theatres were going every night, including Sundays. Karsavina appeared in a new Ballet at the Marinsky, all dance-loving Russia coming to see her. Shaliapin was singing. At the Alexandrinsky they were reviving Meyerhold's production of Tolstoy's "Death of Ivan the Terrible"; and at that performance I remember noticing a student of the Imperial School of Pages, in his dress uniform,

Ten Days That Shook the World

who stood up correctly between the acts and faced the empty Imperial box, with its eagles all erased-. The Krivoye Zerkalo staged a sumptuous version of Schnitzler's "Reigen."

Although the Hermitage and other picture galleries had been evacuated to Moscow, there were weekly exhibitions of paintings. Hordes of the female intelligentzia went to hear lectures on Art, Literature and the Easy Philosophies. It was a particularly active season for Theosophists. And the Salvation Army, admitted to Russia for the first time in history, plastered the walls with announcements of gospel meetings, which amused and astounded Russian audiences.

As in all such times, the petty conventional life of the city went on, ignoring the Revolution as much as possible. The poets made verses-but not about the Revolution. The realistic painters painted scenes from medieval Russian history-anything but the Revolution. Young ladies from the provinces came up to the capital to learn French and cultivate their voices, and the gay young beautiful officers wore their gold-trimmed crimson bashliki and their elaborate Caucasian swords around the hotel lobbies. The ladies of the minor bureaucratic set took tea with each other in the afternoon, carrying each her little gold or silver or jeweled sugar-box, and half a loaf of bread in her muff, and wished that the Tsar were back, or that the Germans would come, or anything that would solve the servant problem-. The daughter of a friend of mine came home one afternoon in hysterics because the woman streetcar conductor had called her "Comrade!"

All around them great Russia was in travail, bearing a new world. The servants one used to treat like animals and pay next to nothing, were getting independent. A pair of shoes cost more than a hundred rubles, and as wages averaged about thirty-five rubles a month the servants refused to stand in queue and wear out their shoes. But more than that. In the new Russia every man and woman could vote; there were working-class newspapers, saying new and startling things; there were the Soviets; and there were the Unions. The izvoshtchiki (cab-drivers) had a Union; they were also represented in the Petrograd Soviet. The waiters and hotel servants were organized, and refused tips. On the walls of restaurants they put up signs which read, "No tips taken here-" or, "Just because a man has to make his living waiting on table is no reason to insult him by offering him a tip!"

John Reed

At the Front the soldiers fought out their fight with the officers, and learned self-government through their committees. In the factories those unique Russian organizations, the Factory-Shop Committees[4] gained experience and strength and a realization of their historical mission by combat with the old order. All Russia was learning to read, and reading-politics, economics, history-because the people wanted to know-. In every city, in most towns, along the Front, each political faction had its newspaper-sometimes several. Hundreds of thousands of pamphlets were distributed by thousands of organizations, and poured into the armies, the villages, the factories, the streets. The thirst for education, so long thwarted, burst with the Revolution into a frenzy of expression. From Smolny Institute alone, the first six months, went out every day tons, car-loads, train-loads of literature, saturating the land. Russia absorbed reading matter like hot sand drinks water, insatiable. And it was not fables, falsified history, diluted religion, and the cheap fiction that corrupts-but social and economic theories, philosophy, the works of Tolstoy, Gogol, and Gorky.

Then the Talk, beside which Carlyle's "flood of French speech" was a mere trickle. Lectures, debates, speeches-in theatres, circuses, school-houses, clubs, Soviet meeting-rooms, Union headquarters, barracks-. Meetings in the trenches at the Front, in village squares, factories-. What a marvellous sight to see Putilovsky Zavod (the Putilov factory) pour out its forty thousand to listen to Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, Anarchists, anybody, whatever they had to say, as long as they would talk! For months in Petrograd, and all over Russia, every street-corner was a public tribune. In railway trains, street-cars, always the spurting up of impromptu debate, everywhere.

And the All-Russian Conferences and Congresses, drawing together the men of two continents-conventions of Soviets, of Cooperatives, Zemstvos, nationalities, priests, peasants, political parties; the Democratic Conference, the Moscow Conference, the Council of the Russian Republic. There were always three or four conventions going on in Petrograd. At every meeting, attempts to limit the time of speakers voted down, and every man free to express the thought that was in him.

We came down to the front of the Twelfth Army, back of Riga, where gaunt and bootless men sickened in the mud of desperate trenches; and when they saw us they started up, with their pinched faces and the flesh showing blue through their torn clothing, demanding eagerly, "Did you bring anything to read?"

Ten Days That Shook the World

What though the outward and visible signs of change were many, what though the statue of Catharine the Great before the Alexandrinsky Theatre bore a little red flag in its hand, and others-somewhat faded-floated from all public buildings; and the Imperial monograms and eagles were either torn down or covered up; and in place of the fierce gorodovoye (city police) a mild-mannered and unarmed citizen militia patrolled the streets-still, there were many quaint anachronisms. For example, Peter the Great's Tabel o Rangov-Table of Ranks-which he riveted upon Russia with an iron hand, still held sway. Almost everybody from the school-boy up wore his prescribed uniform, with the insignia of the Emperor on button and shoulder-strap. Along about five o'clock in the afternoon the streets were full of subdued old gentlemen in uniform, with portfolios, going home from work in the huge, barrack-like Ministries or Government institutions, calculating perhaps how great a mortality among their superiors would advance them to the coveted tchin (rank) of Collegiate Assessor, or Privy Councillor, with the prospect of retirement on a comfortable pension, and possibly the Cross of St. Anne.

There is the story of Senator Sokolov, who in full tide of Revolution came to a meeting of the Senate one day in civilian clothes, and was not admitted because he did not wear the prescribed livery of the Tsar's service!

It was against this background of a whole nation in ferment and disintegration that the pageant of the Rising of the Russian Masses unrolled.

Footnotes

[1]Oborontsi-"Defenders." All the "moderate" Socialist groups adopted or were given this name, because they consented to the continuation of the war under Allied leadership, on the ground that it was a war of National Defence. The Bolsheviki, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, the Mensheviki Internationalists (Martov's faction), and the Social Democrats Internationalists (Gorky's group) were in favour of forcing the Allies to declare democratic war-aims, and to offer peace to Germany on those terms.

[2] Wages And Cost Of Living Before And During The Revolution The

John Reed

following tables of wages and costs were compiled, in October, 1917, by a joint Committee from the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and the Moscow section of the Ministry of Labour, and published in *Novaya Zhizn*, October 26th, 1917:

Wages Per Day-(Rubles and kopeks)

| <i>Trade</i> | <i>July 1914</i> | <i>July 1916</i> | <i>August 1917</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Carpenter, Cabinet-maker | 1.60-2. | 4.-6. | 8.50 |
| Terrassier | 1.30-1.50 | 3.-3.50 | |
| Mason, plasterer | 1.70-2.35 | 4.-6. | 8. |
| Painter, upholsterer | 1.80-2.20 | 3.-5.50 | 8. |
| Blacksmith | 1.-2.25 | 4.-5. | 8.50 |
| Chimney-sweep | 1.50-2. | 4.-5.50 | 7.50 |
| Locksmith | .90-2. | 3.50-6. | 9. |
| Helper | 1.-1.50 | 2.50-4.50 | 8. |

In spite of numerous stories of gigantic advances in wages immediately following the Revolution of March, 1917, these figures, which were published by the Ministry of Labour as characteristic of conditions all over Russia, show that wages did not rise immediately after the Revolution, but little by little. On an average, wages increased slightly more than 500 per cent.

But at the same time the value of the ruble fell to less than one-third its former purchasing power, and the cost of the necessities of life increased enormously.

Ten Days That Shook the World

The following table was compiled by the Municipal Duma of Moscow, where food was cheaper and more plentiful than in Petrograd:

Cost of Food-(Rubles and Kopeks)

| | | <i>August 1914</i> | <i>August 1917</i> | <i>% Increase</i> |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Black bread | <i>(Fund)</i> | .02 1/2 | .12 | 330 |
| White bread | <i>(Fund)</i> | .05 | .20 | 300 |
| Beef | <i>(Fund)</i> | .22 | 1.10 | 400 |
| Veal | <i>(Fund)</i> | .26 | 2.15 | 727 |
| Pork | <i>(Fund)</i> | .23 | 2. | 770 |
| Herring | <i>(Fund)</i> | .06 | .52 | 767 |
| Cheese | <i>(Fund)</i> | .40 | 3.50 | 754 |
| Butter | <i>(Fund)</i> | .48 | 3.20 | 557 |
| Eggs | <i>(Doz.)</i> | .30 | 1.60 | 443 |
| Milk | <i>(Krushka)</i> | .07 | .40 | 471 |

On an average, food increased in price 556 per cent, or 51 per cent more than wages.

As for the other necessities, the price of these increased tremendously.

John Reed

The following table was compiled by the Economic section of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and accepted as correct by the Ministry of Supplies of the Provisional Government.

Cost of Other Necessities-(Rubles and Kopeks)

| | | <i>August 1914</i> | <i>August 1917</i> | <i>% Increase</i> | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Calico | <i>(Arshin)</i> | .11 | 1.40 | | 1173 |
| Cotton cloth | <i>(Arshin)</i> | .15 | 2. | | 1233 |
| Dress Goods | <i>(Arshin)</i> | 2. | 40. | | 1900 |
| Castor Cloth | <i>(Arshin)</i> | 6. | 80. | | 1233 |
| Men's Shoes | <i>(Pair)</i> | 12. | 144. | | 1097 |
| Sole Leather | | 20. | 400. | | 1900 |
| Rubbers | <i>(Pair)</i> | 2.50 | 15. | | 500 |
| Men's Clothing | <i>(Suit)</i> | 40. | 400. -455. | | 900-1109 |
| Tea | <i>(Fund)</i> | 4.50 | 18. | | 300 |
| Matches | <i>(Carton)</i> | .10 | .50 | | 400 |
| Soap | <i>(Pood)</i> | 4.50 | 40. | | 780 |
| Gasoline | <i>(Vedro)</i> | 1.70 | 11. | | 547 |

Ten Days That Shook the World

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|
| Candles | (<i>Pood</i>) | 8.50 | 100. | 1076 |
| Caramel | (<i>Fund</i>) | .30 | 4.50 | 1400 |
| Fire Wood | (Load) | 10. | 120. | 1100 |
| Charcoal | | .80 | 13. | 1525 |
| Sundry Metal Ware | | 1. | 20. | 1900 |

On an average, the above categories of necessities increased about 1,109 per cent in price, more than twice the increase of salaries. The difference, of course, went into the pockets of speculators and merchants.

In September, 1917, when I arrived in Petrograd, the average daily wage of a skilled industrial worker—for example, a steel-worker in the Putilov Factory—was about 8 rubles. At the same time, profits were enormous.... I was told by one of the owners of the Thornton Woollen Mills, an English concern on the outskirts of Petrograd, that while wages had increased about 300 per cent in his factory, his profits had gone up 900 per cent.

[3]The Socialist Ministers The history of the efforts of the Socialists in the Provisional Government of July to realize their programme in coalition with the bourgeois Ministers, is an illuminating example of class struggle in politics. Says Lenin, in explanation of this phenomenon: “The capitalists, seeing that the position of the Government was untenable, resorted to a method which since 1848 has been for decades practised by the capitalists in order to befog, divide, and finally overpower the working-class. This method is the so-called ‘Coalition Ministry,’ composed of bourgeois and of renegades from the Socialist camp.

“In those countries where political freedom and democracy have existed side by side with the revolutionary movement of the workers—for example in England and France—the capitalists make use of this subterfuge, and very successfully too. The ‘Socialist’ leaders, upon

John Reed

entering the Ministries, invariably prove mere figure-heads, puppets, simply a shield for the capitalists, a tool with which to defraud the workers. The 'democratic' and 'republican' capitalists in Russia set in motion this very same scheme. The Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviki fell victim to it, and on June 1st a 'Coalition' Ministry, with the participation of Tchernov, Tseretelli, Skobeliev, Avksentiev, Savinkov, Zarudny and Nikitin became an accomplished fact."-Problems of the Revolution.

[4]September Municipal Elections In Moscow In the first week of October, 1917, Novaya Zhizn published the following comparative table of election results, pointing out that this meant the bankruptcy of the policy of Coalition with the propertied classes. "If civil war can yet be avoided, it can only be done by a united front of all the revolutionary democracy."

| | June 1917 | September 1917 |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Socialist Revolutionaries | 58 Members | 14 Members |
| Cadets | 17 Members | 30 Members |
| Mensheviki | 12 Members | 4 Members |
| Bolsheviki | 11 Members | 47 Members |

[5]Growing Arrogance Of The Reactionaries September 18th. The Cadet Shulgin, writing in a Kiev newspaper, said that the Provisional Government's declaration that Russia was a Republic constituted a gross abuse of its powers. "We cannot admit either a Republic, or the present Republican Government.... And we are not sure that we want a Republic in Russia."

October 23d. At a meeting of the Cadet party held at Riazan, M. Dukhonin declared, "On March 1st we must establish a Constitutional Monarchy. We must not reject the legitimate heir to the throne, Mikhail Alexandrovitch."

Ten Days That Shook the World

October 27th. Resolution passed by the Conference of Business Men at Moscow:

“The Conference... insists that the Provisional Government take the following immediate measures in the Army:

“1. Forbidding of all political propaganda; the Army must be out of politics.

“2. Propaganda of anti-national and international ideas and theories deny the necessity for armies, and hurt discipline; it should be forbidden, and all propagandists punished....

“3. The function of the Army Committees must be limited to economic questions exclusively. All their decisions should be confirmed by their superior officers, who have the right to dissolve the Committees at any time.

“4. The salute to be reestablished, and made obligatory. Full reestablishment of disciplinary power in the hands of officers, with right of review of sentence.

“5. Expulsion from the Corps of Officers of those who dishonour it by participating in the movement of the soldier-masses, which teaches them disobedience.... Reestablishment for this purpose of the Courts of Honor.

“6. The Provisional Government should take the necessary measures to make possible the return to the army of Generals and other officers unjustly discharged under the influence of Committees, and other irresponsible organizations.”



Ten Days That Shook the World

Chapter 2 The Coming Storm

IN September General Kornilov marched on Petrograd to make himself military dictator of Russia. Behind him was suddenly revealed the mailed fist of the bourgeoisie, boldly attempting to crush the Revolution. Some of the Socialist Ministers were implicated; even Kerensky was under suspicion.^[1] Savinkov, summoned to explain to the Central Committee of his party, the Socialist Revolutionaries, refused and was expelled. Kornilov was arrested by the Soldiers' Committees. Generals were dismissed, Ministers suspended from their functions, and the Cabinet fell. Kerensky tried to form a new Government, including the Cadets, party of the bourgeoisie. His party, the Socialist Revolutionaries, ordered him to exclude the Cadets. Kerensky declined to obey, and threatened to resign from the Cabinet if the Socialists insisted. However, popular feeling ran so high that for the moment he did not dare oppose it, and a temporary Directorate of Five of the old Ministers, with Kerensky at the head, assumed the power until the question should be settled.

The Kornilov affair drew together all the Socialist groups—"moderates" as well as revolutionists—in a passionate impulse of self-defence. There must be no more Kornilovs. A new Government must be created, responsible to the elements supporting the Revolution. So the *Tsay-ee-kah* invited the popular organisations to send delegates to a Democratic Conference, which should meet at Petrograd in September.

In the *Tsay-ee-kah* three factions immediately appeared. The Bolsheviks demanded that the All-Russian Congress of Soviets be summoned, and that they take over the power. The "centre" Socialist Revolutionaries, led by Tchernov, joined with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, led by Kamkov and Spiridonova, the Mensheviks Internationalists under Martov, and the "centre" Mensheviks,^[1] represented by Bogdanov and Skobeliev, in demanding a purely Socialist Government. Tseretelli, Dan and Lieber, at the head of the right wing Mensheviks, and the right Socialist Revolutionaries under Avksentiev and

John Reed

Gotz, insisted that the propertied classes must be represented in the new Government.

Almost immediately the Bolsheviki won a majority in the Petrograd Soviet, and the Soviets of Moscow, Kiev, Odessa and other cities followed suit.

Alarmed, the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries in control of the *Tsay-ee-kah* decided that after all they feared the danger of Kornilov less than the danger of Lenin. They revised the plan of representation in the Democratic Conference,^[2] admitting more delegates from the Cooperative Societies and other conservative bodies. Even this packed assembly at first voted for a *Coalition Government without the Cadets*. Only Kerensky's open threat of resignation, and the alarming cries of the "moderate" Socialists that "the Republic is in danger" persuaded the Conference, by a small majority, to declare in favour of the principle of coalition with the bourgeoisie, and to sanction the establishment of a sort of consultative Parliament, without any legislative power, called the Provisional Council of the Russian Republic. In the new Ministry the propertied classes practically controlled, and in the Council of the Russian Republic they occupied a disproportionate number of seats.

The fact is that the *Tsay-ee-kah* no longer represented the rank and file of the Soviets, and had illegally refused to call another All-Russian Congress of Soviets, due in September. It had no intention of calling this Congress or of allowing it to be called. Its official organ, *Izviestia* (News), began to hint that the function of the Soviets was nearly at an end,^[3] and that they might soon be dissolved—At this time, too, the new Government announced as part of its policy the liquidation of "irresponsible organizations"—i.e. the Soviets.

The Bolsheviki responded by summoning the All-Russian Soviets to meet at Petrograd on November 2, and take over the Government of Russia. At the same time they withdrew from the Council of the Russian Republic, stating that they would not participate in a "Government of Treason to the People."^[4]

Ten Days That Shook the World

The withdrawal of the Bolsheviki, however, did not bring tranquillity to the ill-fated Council. The propertied classes, now in a position of power, became arrogant. The Cadets declared that the Government had no legal right to declare Russia a republic. They demanded stern measures in the Army and Navy to destroy the Soldiers' and Sailors' Committees, and denounced the Soviets. On the other side of the chamber the Mensheviki Internationalists and the Left Socialist Revolutionaries advocated immediate peace, land to the peasants, and workers' control of industry—practically the Bolshevik program.

I heard Martov's speech in answer to the Cadets. Stooped over the desk of the tribune like the mortally sick man he was, and speaking in a voice so hoarse it could hardly be heard, he shook his finger toward the right benches:

"You call us defeatists; but the real defeatists are those who wait for a more propitious moment to conclude peace, insist upon postponing peace until later, until nothing is left of the Russian army, until Russia becomes the subject of bargaining between the different imperialist groups. You are trying to impose upon the Russian people a policy dictated by the interests of the bourgeoisie. The question of peace should be raised without delay. You will see then that not in vain has been the work of those whom you call German agents, of those Zimmerwaldists[2] who in all the lands have prepared the awakening of the conscience of the democratic masses."

Between these two groups the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries wavered, irresistibly forced to the left by the pressure of the rising dissatisfaction of the masses. Deep hostility divided the chamber into irreconcilable groups.

This was the situation when the long-awaited announcement of the Allied Conference in Paris brought up the burning question of foreign policy.

John Reed

Theoretically all Socialist parties in Russia were in favour of the earliest possible peace on democratic terms. As long ago as May, 1917, the Petrograd Soviet, then under control of the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries, had proclaimed the famous Russian peace-conditions. They had demanded that the Allies hold a conference to discuss war-aims. This conference had been promised for August; then postponed until September; then until October; and now it was fixed for November 10th.

The Provisional Government suggested two representatives—General Alexeyev, reactionary military man, and Terestchenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Soviets chose Skobeliev to speak for them and drew up a manifesto, the famous *nakaz*—instructions.^[5] The Provisional Government objected to Skobeliev and his *nakaz*; the Allied ambassadors protested and finally Bonar Law in the British House of Commons, in answer to a question, responded coldly, “As far as I know the Paris Conference will not discuss the aims of the war at all, but only the methods of conducting it.”

At this the conservative Russian press was jubilant, and the Bolsheviki cried, “See where the compromising tactics of the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries have led them!”

Along a thousand miles of front the millions of men in Russia’s armies stirred like the sea rising, pouring into the capital their hundreds upon hundreds of delegations, crying “Peace! Peace!”

I went across the river to the Cirque Moderne, to one of the great popular meetings which occurred all over the city, more numerous night after night. The bare, gloomy amphitheatre, lit by five tiny lights hanging from a thin wire, was packed from the ring up the steep sweep of grimy benches to the very roof—soldiers, sailors, workmen, women, all listening as if their lives depended upon it. A soldier was speaking—from the Five Hundred and Forty-eight Division, wherever and whatever that was:

Ten Days That Shook the World

“Comrades,” he cried, and there was real anguish in his drawn face and despairing gestures. “The people at the top are always calling upon us to sacrifice more, sacrifice more, while those who have everything are left unmolested.

“We are at war with Germany. Would we invite German generals to serve on our Staff? Well we’re at war with the capitalists too, and yet we invite them into our Government.

“The soldier says, ‘Show me what I am fighting for. Is it Constantinople, or is it free Russia? Is it the democracy, or is it the capitalist plunderers? If you can prove to me that I am defending the Revolution then I’ll go out and fight without capital punishment to force me.’

“When the land belongs to the peasants, and the factories to the workers, and the power to the Soviets, then we’ll know we have something to fight for, and we’ll fight for it!”

In the barracks, the factories, on the street-corners, endless soldier speakers, all clamoring for an end to the war, declaring that if the Government did not make an energetic effort to get peace, the army would leave the trenches and go home.

The spokesman for the Eighth Army:

“We are weak, we have only a few men left in each company. They must give us food and boots and reinforcements, or soon there will be left only empty trenches. Peace or supplies—either let the Government end the war or support the Army.”

For the Forty-sixth Siberian Artillery:

“The officers will not work with our Committees, they betray us to the enemy, they apply the death penalty to our agitators; and the counter-revolutionary Government supports them. We thought that the Revolution would bring peace. But now the Government forbids us even

John Reed

to talk of such things, and at the same time doesn't give us enough food to live on, or enough ammunition to fight with."

From Europe came rumors of peace at the expense of Russia.^[6]

News of the treatment of Russian troops in France added to the discontent. The First Brigade had tried to replace its officers with Soldiers' Committees, like their comrades at home, and had refused an order to go to Salonika, demanding to be sent to Russia. They had been surrounded and starved, and then fired on by artillery, and many killed.^[7]

On October 29th I went to the white-marble and crimson hall of the Marinsky palace, where the Council of the Republic sat, to hear Terestchenko's declaration of the Government's foreign policy, awaited with such terrible anxiety by all the peace-thirsty and exhausted land. A tall, impeccably-dressed young man with a smooth face and high cheekbones, suavely reading his careful, non-committal speech.^[8]

Nothing. Only the same platitudes about crushing German militarism with the help of the Allies—about the "state interests" of Russia, about the "embarrassment" caused by Skobeliev's *nakaz*. He ended with the key-note:

"Russia is a great power. Russia will remain a great power, whatever happens. We must all defend her, we must show that we are defenders of a great ideal, and children of a great power."

Nobody was satisfied. The reactionaries wanted a "strong" imperialist policy; the democratic parties wanted an assurance that the Government would press for peace. I reproduce an editorial in *Rabotchi i Soldat* (Worker and Soldier), organ of the Bolshevik Petrograd Soviet:

The Government's Answer To The Trenches

The most taciturn of our Ministers, Mr. Terestchenko, has actually told the trenches the following:

Ten Days That Shook the World

1. We are closely united with our Allies. (Not with the peoples, but with the Governments.)

2. There is no use for the democracy to discuss the possibility or impossibility of a winter campaign. That will be decided by the Governments of our Allies.

3. The 1st of July offensive was beneficial and a very happy affair. (He did not mention the consequences.)

4. It is not true that our Allies do not care about us. The Minister has in his possession very important declarations. (Declarations? What about deeds? What about the behaviour of the British fleet?^[9])

The parleying of the British king with exiled counter-revolutionary General Gurko? The Minister did not mention all this.)

5. The *nakaz* to Skobeliev is bad; the Allies don't like it and the Russian diplomats don't like it. In the Allied Conference we must all 'speak one language.'

And is that all? That is all. What is the way out? The solution is, faith in the Allies and in Terestchenko. When will peace come? When the Allies permit.

That is how the Government replied to the trenches about peace!

Now in the background of Russian politics began to form the vague outlines of a sinister power—the Cossacks. *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life), Gorky's paper, called attention to their activities:

At the beginning of the Revolution the Cossacks refused to shoot down the people. When Kornilov marched on Petrograd they refused to follow him. From passive loyalty to the Revolution the Cossacks have passed to an active political offensive (against it). From the background

John Reed

of the Revolution they have suddenly advanced to the front of the stage.

Kaledin, *ataman* of the Don Cossacks, had been dismissed by the Provisional Government for his complicity in the Kornilov affair. He flatly refused to resign, and surrounded by three immense Cossack armies lay at Novotcherkask, plotting and menacing. So great was his power that the Government was forced to ignore his insubordination. More than that, it was compelled formally to recognise the Council of the Union of Cossack Armies, and to declare illegal the newly-formed Cossack Section of the Soviets.

In the first part of October a Cossack delegation called upon Kerensky, arrogantly insisting that the charges against Kaledin be dropped, and reproaching the Minister-President for yielding to the Soviets. Kerensky agreed to let Kaledin alone, and then is reported to have said, "In the eyes of the Soviet leaders I am a despot and a tyrant. As for the Provisional Government, not only does it not depend upon the Soviets, but it considers it regrettable that they exist at all."

At the same time another Cossack mission called upon the British ambassador, treating with him boldly as representatives of "the free Cossack people."

In the Don something very like a Cossack Republic had been established. The Kuban declared itself an independent Cossack State. The Soviets of Rostov-on-Don and Yekaterinburg were dispersed by armed Cossacks, and the headquarters of the Coal Miners' Union at Kharkov raided. In all its manifestations the Cossack movement was anti-Socialist and militaristic. Its leaders were nobles and great land-owners, like Kaledin, Kornilov, Generals Dutov, Karaulov and Bardizhe, and it was backed by the powerful merchants and bankers of Moscow.

Old Russia was rapidly breaking up. In Ukraine, in Finland, Poland, White Russia, the nationalist movements gathered strength and became bolder. The local Governments, controlled by the propertied classes, claimed autonomy, refusing to obey orders from Petrograd. At

Ten Days That Shook the World

Helsingfors the Finnish Senate declined to loan money to the Provisional Government, declared Finland autonomous, and demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops. The bourgeois Rada at Kiev extended the boundaries of Ukraine until they included all the richest agricultural lands of South Russia, as far east as the Urals, and began the formation of a national army. Premier Vinnitchenko hinted at a separate peace with Germany—and the Provisional Government was helpless. Siberia, the Caucasus, demanded separate Constituent Assemblies. And in all these countries there was the beginning of a bitter struggle between the authorities and the local Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.



Conditions were daily more chaotic.

Hundreds of thousands of soldiers were deserting the front and beginning to move in vast, aimless tides over the face of the land. The peasants of Tambov and Tver Governments, tired of

waiting for the land, exasperated by the repressive measures of the Government, were burning manor-houses and massacring land-owners. Immense strikes and lockouts convulsed Moscow, Odessa and the coal-mines of the Don. Transportation was paralyzed; the army was starving and in the big cities there was no bread.



The Government, torn between the democratic and reactionary factions, could do nothing: when forced to act it always supported the interests

John Reed

of the propertied classes. Cossacks were sent to restore order among the peasants, to break the strikes. In Tashkent, Government authorities suppressed the Soviet. In Petrograd the Economic Council, established to rebuild the shattered economic life of the country, came to a deadlock between the opposing forces of capital and labour, and was dissolved by Kerensky. The old régime military men, backed by Cadets, demanded that harsh measures be adopted to restore discipline in the Army and the Navy. In vain Admiral Verderevsky, the venerable Minister of Marine, and General Verkhovsky, Minister of War, insisted that only a new, voluntary, democratic discipline, based on cooperation with the soldiers' and sailors' Committees, could save the army and navy. Their recommendations were ignored.

The reactionaries seemed determined to provoke popular anger. The trial of Kornilov was coming on. More and more openly the bourgeois press defended him, speaking of him as "the great Russian patriot." Burtzev's paper, *Obshtchee Dielo* (Common Cause), called for a dictatorship of Kornilov, Kaledin and Kerensky!

I had a talk with Burtzev one day in the press gallery of the Council of the Republic. A small, stooped figure with a wrinkled face, eyes nearsighted behind thick glasses, untidy hair and beard streaked with grey.

"Mark my words, young man! What Russia needs is a Strong Man. We should get our minds off the Revolution now and concentrate on the Germans. Bunglers, bunglers, to defeat Kornilov; and back of the bunglers are the German agents. Kornilov should have won."

On the extreme right the organs of the scarcely-veiled Monarchists, Purishkevitch's *Narodny Tribuna* (People's Tribune), *Novaya Rus* (New Russia), and *Zhivoye Slovo* (Living Word), openly advocated the extermination of the revolutionary democracy.

On the 23rd of October occurred the naval battle with a German squadron in the Gulf of Riga. On the pretext that Petrograd was in danger, the Provisional Government drew up plans for evacuating the

Ten Days That Shook the World

capital. First the great munitions works were to go, distributed widely throughout Russia; and then the Government itself was to move to Moscow. Instantly the Bolsheviki began to cry out that the Government was abandoning the Red Capital in order to weaken the Revolution. Riga had been sold to the Germans; now Petrograd was being betrayed!

The bourgeois press was joyful. "At Moscow," said the Cadet paper *Ryetch* (Speech), "the Government can pursue its work in a tranquil atmosphere, without being interfered with by anarchists." Rodzianko, leader of the right wing of the Cadet party, declared in *Utro Rossii* (The Morning of Russia) that the taking of Petrograd by the Germans would be a blessing, because it would destroy the Soviets and get rid of the revolutionary Baltic Fleet:

Petrograd is in danger (he wrote). I say to myself, "Let God take care of Petrograd." They fear that if Petrograd is lost the central revolutionary organizations will be destroyed. To that I answer that I rejoice if all these organizations are destroyed; for they will bring nothing but disaster upon Russia.

With the taking of Petrograd the Baltic Fleet will also be destroyed. But there will be nothing to regret; most of the battleships are completely demoralised.

In the face of a storm of popular disapproval the plan of evacuation was repudiated.

Meanwhile the Congress of Soviets loomed over Russia like a thunder-cloud, shot through with lightnings. It was opposed, not only by the Government but by all the "moderate" Socialists. The Central Army and Fleet Committees, the Central Committees of some of the Trade Unions, the Peasants' Soviets, but most of all the *Tsay-ee-kah* itself, spared no pains to prevent the meeting. *Izviestia* and *Golos Soldata* (Voice of the Soldier), newspapers founded by the Petrograd Soviet but now in the hands of the *Tsay-ee-kah*, fiercely assailed it, as did the entire artillery of the Socialist Revolutionary party press, *Dielo Naroda* (People's Cause) and *Volia Naroda* (People's Will).

John Reed

Delegates were sent through the country, messages flashed by wire to committees in charge of local Soviets, to Army Committees, instructing them to halt or delay elections to the Congress. Solemn public resolutions against the Congress, declarations that the democracy was opposed to the meeting so near the date of the Constituent Assembly, representatives from the Front, from the Union of Zemstvos, the Peasants' Union, Union of Cossack Armies, Union of Officers, Knights of St. George, Death Battalions,[3] protesting. The Council of the Russian Republic was one chorus of disapproval. The entire machinery set up by the Russian Revolution of March functioned to block the Congress of Soviets.

On the other hand was the shapeless will of the proletariat—the workmen, common soldiers and poor peasants. Many local Soviets were already Bolshevik; then there were the organisations of the industrial workers, the *Fabritchno-Zavodskiye Comitieti* Factory-Shop Committees; and the insurgent Army and Fleet organisations. In some places the people, prevented from electing their regular Soviet delegates, held rump meetings and chose one of their number to go to Petrograd. In others they smashed the old obstructionist committees and formed new ones. A ground-swell of revolt heaved and cracked the crust which had been slowly hardening on the surface of revolutionary fires dormant all those months. Only an spontaneous mass-movement could bring about the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

Ten Days That Shook the World



Day after day the Bolshevik orators toured the barracks and factories, violently denouncing “this Government of civil war.” One Sunday we went, on a top-heavy steam tram that lumbered through oceans of mud, between stark factories and immense churches, to *Obukhovsky Zavod*, a Government munitions-plant out on the Schlüsselburg Prospekt.

The meeting took place between the gaunt brick walls of a huge unfinished building, ten thousand black-clothed men and women packed around a scaffolding draped in red, people heaped on piles of lumber and bricks, perched high upon shadowy girders, intent and thunder-voiced. Through the dull, heavy sky now and again burst the sun, flooding reddish light through the skeleton windows upon the mass of simple faces upturned to us.

Lunatcharsky, a slight, student-like figure with the sensitive face of an artist, was telling why the power must be taken by the Soviets. Nothing else could guarantee the Revolution against its enemies, who

John Reed

were deliberately ruining the country, ruining the army, creating opportunities for a new Konilov.

A soldier from the Rumanian front, thin, tragical and fierce, cried, "Comrades! We are starving at the front, we are stiff with cold. We are dying for no reason. I ask the American comrades to carry word to America, that the Russians will never give up their Revolution until they die. We will hold the fort with all our strength until the peoples of the world rise and help us! Tell the American workers to rise and fight for the Social Revolution!"

Then came Petrovsky, slight, slow-voiced, implacable: "Now is the time for deeds, not words. The economic situation is bad, but we must get used to it. They are trying to starve us and freeze us. They are trying to provoke us. But let them know that they can go too far—that if they dare to lay their hands upon the organisations of the proletariat we will sweep them away like scum from the face of the earth!"

The Bolshevik press suddenly expanded. Besides the two party papers, *Rabotchi Put* and *Soldat* (Soldier), there appeared a new paper for the peasants, *Derevenskaya Byednota* (Village Poorest), poured out in a daily half-million edition; and on October 17th, *Rabotchi i Soldat*. Its leading article summed up the Bolshevik point of view:

The fourth year's campaign will mean the annihilation of the army and the country. There is danger for the safety of Petrograd. Counter-revolutionists rejoice in the people's misfortunes. The peasants brought to desperation come out in open rebellion; the landlords and Government authorities massacre them with punitive expeditions; factories and mines are closing down, workmen are threatened with starvation. The bourgeoisie and its Generals want to restore a blind discipline in the army. Supported by the bourgeoisie, the Kornilovtsi are openly getting ready to break up the meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

The Kerensky Government is against the people. He will destroy the country. This paper stands for the people and by the people—the

Ten Days That Shook the World

poor classes, workers, soldiers and peasants. The people can only be saved by the completion of the Revolution—and for this purpose the full power must be in the hands of the Soviets.

This paper advocates the following: All power to the Soviets—both in the capital and in the provinces.

Immediate truce on all fronts. An honest peace between peoples.

Landlord estates—without compensation—to the peasants.
Workers' control over industrial production.

A faithfully and honestly elected Constituent Assembly.
It is interesting to reproduce here a passage from that same paper—the organ of those Bolsheviki so well known to the world as German agents: The German Kaiser, covered with the blood of millions of dead people, wants to push his army against Petrograd. Let us call to the German workmen, soldiers and peasants, who want peace not less than we do, to—stand up against this damned war!

This can be done only by a revolutionary Government, which would speak really for the workmen, soldiers and peasants of Russia, and would appeal over the heads of the diplomats directly to the German troops, fill the German trenches with proclamations in the German language. Our airmen would spread these proclamations all over Germany.

In the Council of the Republic the gulf between the two sides of the chamber deepened day by day.

“The propertied classes,” cried Karelin, for the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, “want to exploit the revolutionary machine of the State to bind Russia to the war-chariot of the Allies! The revolutionary parties are absolutely against this policy.”

John Reed

Old Nicholas Tchaikovsky, representing the Populist Socialists, spoke against giving the land to the peasants, and took the side of the Cadets: "We must have immediately strong discipline in the army. Since the beginning of the war I have not ceased to insist that it is a crime to undertake social and economic reforms in war-time. We are committing that crime, and yet I am not the enemy of these reforms, because I am a Socialist."

Cries from the Left, "We don't believe you!" Mighty applause from the Right.

Adzhemov, for the Cadets, declared that there was no necessity to tell the army what it was fighting for, since every soldier ought to realise that the first task was to drive the enemy from Russian territory. Kerensky himself came twice, to plead passionately for national unity, once bursting into tears at the end. The assembly heard him coldly, interrupting with ironical remarks.

Smolny Institute, headquarters of the *Tsay-ee-kah* and of the Petrograd Soviet, lay miles out on the edge of the city, beside the wide Neva. I went there on a street-car, moving snail-like with a groaning noise through the cobbled, muddy streets, and jammed with people. At the end of the line rose the graceful smoke-blue cupolas of Smolny Convent outlined in dull gold, beautiful; and beside it the great barracks like façade of Smolny Institute, two hundred yards long and three lofty stories high, the Imperial arms carved hugely in stone still insolent over the entrance.

Under the old régime a famous convent-school for the daughters of the Russian nobility, patronized by the Tsarina herself, the Institute had been taken over by the revolutionary organizations of workers and soldiers. Within were more than a hundred huge rooms, white and bare, on their doors enameled plaques still informing the passerby that within was "Ladies' Class-room Number 4" or "Teachers' Bureau"; but over these hung crudely-lettered signs, evidence of the vitality of the new order: "Central Committee of the Petrograd Soviet" and "*Tsay-ee-kah*" and "Bureau of Foreign Affairs"; "Union of Socialist Soldiers," "Central

Ten Days That Shook the World

Committee of the All-Russian Trade Unions," "Factory-Shop Committees," "Central Army Committee"; and the central offices and caucus-rooms of the political parties.

The long, vaulted corridors, lit by rare electric lights, were thronged with hurrying shapes of soldiers and workmen, some bent under the weight of huge bundles of newspapers, proclamations, printed propaganda of all sorts. The sound of their heavy boots made a deep and incessant thunder on the wooden floor. Signs were posted up everywhere: "Comrades! For the sake of your health, preserve cleanliness!" Long tables stood at the head of the stairs on every floor, and on the landings, heaped with pamphlets and the literature of the different political parties, for sale.

**ТОВАРИЩИ,
ДЛЯ ВАШЕГО-ЖЕ ЗДОРОВЬЯ,
СОБЛЮДАЙТЕ ЧИСТОТУ.**

*Comrades For The Sake Of
Your Health, Preserve
Cleanliness*

The spacious, low-ceilinged refectory downstairs was still a dining-room. For two rubles I bought a ticket entitling me to dinner, and stood in line with a thousand others, waiting to get to the long serving-tables, where twenty men and women were ladling from immense cauldrons cabbage soup, hunks of meat and piles of *kasha*, slabs of black bread. Five kopeks paid for tea in a tin cup. From a basket one grabbed a greasy wooden spoon. The benches along the wooden tables were packed with hungry proletarians, wolfing their food, plotting, shouting rough jokes across the room.

Upstairs was another eating-place, reserved for the *Tsay-ee-kah*— though everyone went there. Here could be had bread thickly buttered and endless glasses of tea.



In the south wing on the second floor was the great hall of meetings, the former ball-room of the Institute. A lofty white room lighted by glazed-white chandeliers holding hundreds of ornate electric bulbs, and divided by two rows of massive columns; at one end a dais, flanked with two tall many-branched light standards, and a gold frame behind, from which the Imperial portrait had been cut. Here on festal occasions had been banked brilliant military and ecclesiastical uniforms, a setting for Grand Duchesses.

Just across the hall outside was the office of the Credentials Committee for the Congress of Soviets. I stood there watching the new delegates come in—burly, bearded soldiers, workmen in black blouses, a few long-haired peasants. The girl in charge—a member of Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo* [4] group—smiled contemptuously. "These are very different people from the delegates to the first *Siezd* (Congress)," she remarked. "See how rough and ignorant they look! The Dark People." It was true; the depths of Russia had been stirred, and it was the bottom which came uppermost now. The Credentials Committee, appointed by the old *Tsay-ee-kah*, was challenging delegate after delegate, on the ground

Ten Days That Shook the World

that they had been illegally elected. Karakhan, member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, simply grinned. "Never mind," he said, "When the time comes we'll see that you get your seats."

Rabotchi i Soldat said:

The attention of delegates to the new All-Russian Congress is called to attempts of certain members of the Organising Committee to break up the Congress, by asserting that it will not take place, and that delegates had better leave Petrograd. Pay no attention to these lies. Great days are coming.

It was evident that a quorum would not come together by November 2, so the opening of the Congress was postponed to the 7th. But the whole country was now aroused; and the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, realising that they were defeated, suddenly changed their tactics and began to wire frantically to their provincial organisations to elect as many "moderate" Socialist delegates as possible. At the same time the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets issued an emergency call for a Peasants' Congress, to meet December 13th and offset whatever action the workers and soldiers might take.

What would the Bolsheviks do? Rumours ran through the city that there would be an armed "demonstration," a *vystuplennie*—"coming out" of the workers and soldiers. The bourgeois and reactionary press prophesied insurrection, and urged the Government to arrest the Petrograd Soviet, or at least to prevent the meeting of the Congress. Such sheets as *Novaya Rus* advocated a general Bolshevik massacre.

Gorky's paper, *Novaya Zhizn*, agreed with the Bolsheviks that the reactionaries were attempting to destroy the Revolution, and that if necessary they must be resisted by force of arms; but all the parties of the revolutionary democracy must present a united front.

As long as the democracy has not organised its principal forces, so long as the resistance to its influence is still strong, there is no

John Reed

advantage in passing to the attack. But if the hostile elements appeal to force, then the revolutionary democracy should enter the battle to seize the power, and it will be sustained by the most profound strata of the people.

Gorky pointed out that both reactionary and Government newspapers were inciting the Bolsheviks to violence. An insurrection, however, would prepare the way for a new Kornilov. He urged the Bolsheviks to deny the rumours. Potressov, in the Menshevik *Dien* (Day), published a sensational story, accompanied by a map, which professed to reveal the secret Bolshevik plan of campaign.

As if by magic, the walls were covered with warnings, proclamations, ^[10] appeals, from the Central Committees of the “moderate” and conservative factions and the *Tsay-ee-kah*, denouncing any “demonstrations,” imploring the workers and soldiers not to listen to agitators. For instance, this from the Military Section of the Socialist Revolutionary party.

Again rumours are spreading around the town of an intended *vystuplennie*. What is the source of these rumours? What organisation authorises these agitators who preach insurrection? The Bolsheviks, to a question addressed to them in the *Tsay-ee-kah*, denied that they have anything to do with it. But these rumours themselves carry with them a great danger. It may easily happen that, not taking into consideration the state of mind of the majority of the workers, soldiers and peasants, individual hot-heads will call out part of the workers and soldiers on the streets, inciting them to an uprising. In this fearful time through which revolutionary Russia is passing, any insurrection can easily turn into civil war, and there can result from it the destruction of all organisations of the proletariat, built up with so much labour. The counter-revolutionary plotters are planning to take advantage of this insurrection to destroy the Revolution, open the front to Wilhelm, and wreck the Constituent Assembly. Stick stubbornly to your posts! Do not come out!

On October 28th, in the corridors of Smolny, I spoke with Kameniev, a little man with a reddish pointed beard and Gallic

Ten Days That Shook the World

gestures. He was not at all sure that enough delegates would come. "If there *is* a Congress," he said, "it will represent the overwhelming sentiment of the people. If the majority is Bolshevik, as I think it will be, we shall demand that the power be given to the Soviets, and the Provisional Government must resign."

Volodarsky, a tall, pale youth with glasses and a bad complexion, was more definite. "The 'Lieber-Dans' and the other compromisers are sabotaging the Congress. If they succeed in preventing its meeting,—well, then we are realists enough not to depend on *that!*"

Under date of October 29th I find entered in my notebook the following items culled from the newspapers of the day:

Moghilev (General Staff Headquarters). Concentration here of loyal Guard Regiments, the Savage Division, Cossacks and Death Battalions.

The *yunkers* of the Officers' Schools of Pavlovsk, Tsarskoye Selo and Peterhof ordered by the Government to be ready to come to Petrograd. Oranienbaum *yunkers* arrive in the city.

Part of the Armoured Car Division of the Petrograd garrison stationed in the Winter Palace.

Upon orders signed by Trotzky, several thousand rifles delivered by the Government Arms Factory at Sestroretzk to delegates of the Petrograd workmen.

At a meeting of the City Militia of the Lower Liteiny Quarter, a resolution demanding that all power be given to the Soviets. This is just a sample of the confused events of those feverish days, when everybody knew that something was going to happen, but nobody knew just what.

At a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet in Smolny, the night of October 30th, Trotzky branded the assertions of the bourgeois press

John Reed

that the Soviet contemplated armed insurrection as “an attempt of the reactionaries to discredit and wreck the Congress of Soviets. The Petrograd Soviet,” he declared, “had not ordered any *uystuplennie*. If it is necessary we shall do so, and we will be supported by the Petrograd garrison. They (the Government) are preparing a counter-revolution; and we shall answer with an offensive which will be merciless and decisive.”

It is true that the Petrograd Soviet had not ordered a demonstration, but the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party was considering the question of insurrection. All night long the 23d they met. There were present all the party intellectuals, the leaders—and delegates of the Petrograd workers and garrison. Alone of the intellectuals Lenin and Trotzky stood for insurrection. Even the military men opposed it. A vote was taken. Insurrection was defeated!

Then arose a rough workman, his face convulsed with rage. “I speak for the Petrograd proletariat,” he said, harshly. “We are in favour of insurrection. Have it your own way, but I tell you now that if you allow the Soviets to be destroyed, *we’re through with you!*” Some soldiers joined him. And after that they voted again—insurrection won.^[11]

However, the right wing of the Bolsheviks, led by Riazanov, Kameniev and Zinoviev, continued to campaign against an armed rising. On the morning of October 31st appeared in *Rabotchi Put* the first instalment of Lenin’s “Letter to the Comrades,” one of the most audacious pieces of political propaganda the world has ever seen. In it Lenin seriously presented the arguments in favour of insurrection, taking as text the objections of Kameniev and Riazanov.

“Either we must abandon our slogan, ‘All Power to the Soviets,’” he wrote, “or else we must make an insurrection. There is no middle course.”

Ten Days That Shook the World



*Pavel Milyukov, Milyukov in 1916
Foreign Minister of the Russian
Provisional Government*

Pavel Nikolayevich Miliukov (Russian: Па́вел Нико́лаевич Милюко́в, IPA: [mʲɪlʲʉˈkof]; 27 January [O.S. 15 January] 1859 – 31 March 1943) was a Russian historian and liberal politician. Milyukov was the founder, leader, and the most prominent member of the Constitutional Democratic party (known as the Kadets). In the Russian Provisional Government, he served as Foreign Minister, working to prevent Russia's exit from the First World War.

That same afternoon Paul Miliukov, leader of the Cadets, made a brilliant, bitter speech^[12] in the Council of the Republic, branding the Skobeliev *nakaz* as pro-German, declaring that the “revolutionary democracy” was destroying Russia, sneering at Terestchenko, and openly declaring that he preferred German diplomacy to Russian. The Left benches were one roaring tumult all through.

On its part the Government could not ignore the significance of the success of the Bolshevik propaganda. On the 29th joint commission of the Government and the Council of the Republic hastily drew up two laws, one for giving the land temporarily to the peasants, and the other for pushing an energetic foreign policy of peace. The next day Kerensky suspended capital punishment in the army. That same afternoon was opened with great ceremony the first session of the new “Commission for Strengthening the Republican Régime and Fighting Against Anarchy and Counter-Revolution” of which history shows not the slightest further trace. The following morning with two other correspondents I interviewed Kerensky^[13] —the last time he received journalists.

John Reed

"The Russian people," he said, bitterly, "are suffering from economic fatigue—and from disillusionment with the Allies! The world thinks that the Russian Revolution is at an end. Do not be mistaken. The Russian Revolution is just beginning." Words more prophetic, perhaps, than he knew.

Stormy was the all-night meeting of the Petrograd Soviet the 30th of October, at which I was present. The "moderate" Socialist intellectuals, officers, members of Army Committees, the *Tsay-ee-kah*, were there in force. Against them rose up workmen, peasants and common soldiers, passionate and simple.

A peasant told of the disorders in Tver, which he said were caused by the arrest of the Land Committees. "This Kerensky is nothing but a shield to the *pomieshtchiki* (landowners)," he cried. "They know that at the Constituent Assembly we will take the land anyway, so they are trying to destroy the Constituent Assembly!"

A machinist from the Putilov works described how the superintendents were closing down the departments one by one on the pretext that there was no fuel or raw materials. The Factory-Shop Committee, he declared, had discovered huge hidden supplies.

"It is a *provocatzia*," said he. "They want to starve us—or drive us to violence!"

Among the soldiers one began, "Comrades! I bring you greetings from the place where men are digging their graves and call them trenches!"

Then arose a tall, gaunt young soldier, with flashing eyes, met with a roar of welcome. It was Tchudnovsky, reported killed in the July fighting, and now risen from the dead.

"The soldier masses no longer trust their officers. Even the Army Committees, who refused to call a meeting of our Soviet, betrayed us. The masses of the soldiers want the Constituent Assembly to be held

Ten Days That Shook the World

exactly when it was called for, and those who dare to postpone it will be cursed—and not only platonic curses either, for the Army has guns too.”

He told of the electoral campaign for the Constituent now raging in the Fifth Army. “The officers, and especially the Mensheviki and the Socialist Revolutionaries, are trying deliberately to cripple the Bolsheviks. Our papers are not allowed to circulate in the trenches. Our speakers are arrested—”

“Why don’t you speak about the lack of bread?” shouted another soldier.

“Man shall not live by bread alone,” answered Tchudnovsky, sternly.

Followed him an officer, delegate from the Vitebsk Soviet, a Menshevik *oboronetz*. “It isn’t the question of who has the power. The trouble is not with the Government, but with the war. and the war must be won before any change—” At this, hoots and ironical cheers. “These Bolshevik agitators are demagogues!” The hall rocked with laughter. “Let us for a moment forget the class struggle—” But he got no farther. A voice yelled, “Don’t you wish we would!”

Petrograd presented a curious spectacle in those days. In the factories the committee-rooms were filled with stacks of rifles, couriers came and went, the Red Guard[5]drilled. In all the barracks meetings every night, and all day long interminable hot arguments. On the streets the crowds thickened toward gloomy evening, pouring in slow voluble tides up and down the Nevsky, fighting for the newspapers. Hold-ups increased to such an extent that it was dangerous to walk down side streets. On the Sadovaya one afternoon I saw a crowd of several hundred people beat and trample to death a soldier caught stealing. Mysterious individuals circulated around the shivering women who waited in *queue* long cold hours for bread and milk, whispering that the Jews had cornered the food supply—and that while the people starved, the Soviet members lived luxuriously.

John Reed

At Smolny there were strict guards at the door and the outer gates, demanding everybody's pass. The committee-rooms buzzed and hummed all day and all night, hundreds of soldiers and workmen slept on the floor, wherever they could find room. Upstairs in the great hall a thousand people crowded to the uproarious sessions of the Petrograd Soviet.

Gambling clubs functioned hectically from dusk to dawn, with champagne flowing and stakes of twenty thousand rubles. In the centre of the city at night prostitutes in jewels and expensive furs walked up and down, crowded the cafés.

Monarchist plots, German spies, smugglers hatching schemes. And in the rain, the bitter chill, the great throbbing city under grey skies rushing faster and faster toward—what?

Footnotes

[1] The Kornilov revolt is treated in detail in my forthcoming volume, "Kornilov to Brest-Litovsk." The responsibility of Kerensky for the situation which gave rise to Kornilov's attempt is now pretty clearly established. Many apologists for Kerensky say that he knew of Kornilov's plans, and by a trick drew him out prematurely, and then crushed him. Even Mr. A. J. Sack, in his book, "The Birth of the Russian Democracy," says:

"Several things. are almost certain. The first is that Kerensky knew about the movement of several detachments from the Front toward Petrograd, and it is possible that as Prime Minister and Minister of War, realizing the growing Bolshevik danger, he called for them."

Ten Days That Shook the World

The only flaw in that argument is that there was no “Bolshevist danger” at that time, the Bolsheviks still being a powerless minority in the Soviets, and their leaders in jail or hiding.

^[2] *Democratic Conference* When the Democratic Conference was first proposed to Kerensky, he suggested an assembly of all the elements in the nation ‘the live forces,’ as he called them—including bankers, manufacturers, land-owners, and representatives of the Cadet party. The Soviet refused, and drew up the following table of representation, which Kerensky agreed to:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 100 delegates | All-Russian Soviets Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies |
|------------------|---|

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 100 delegates | All-Russian Soviets Peasants’ Deputies |
|------------------|--|

| | |
|--------------|--|
| 50 delegates | Provincial Soviets Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies |
|--------------|--|

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 50 delegates | Peasants’ District Land Committees |
|--------------|------------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 100 delegates | Trade Unions |
|------------------|--------------|

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| 84 delegates | Army Committees at the Front |
|--------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 150 delegates | Workers’ and Peasants’ Cooperative Societies |
|------------------|--|

| | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| 20 delegates | Railway Workers’ Union |
|--------------|------------------------|

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10 delegates | Post and Telegraph Workers’ Union |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 20 delegates | Commercial Clerks |
|--------------|-------------------|

John Reed

15 delegates Liberal Professions—Doctors, Lawyers, Journalists, etc.

50 delegates Provincial Zemstvos

59 delegates Nationalist Organisations—Poles, Ukrainians, etc.

This proportion was altered twice or three times. The final disposition of delegates was:

300 delegates All-Russian Soviets Workers', Soldiers' & Peasants' Deputies

300 delegates Cooperative Societies

300 delegates Municipalities

150 delegates Army Committees at the Front

150 delegates Provincial Zemstvos

200 delegates Trade Unions

100 delegates Nationalist Organisations

200 delegates Several small groups

[3] On September 28th, 1917, *Izvestia*, organ of the *Tsay-ee-kah*, published an article which said, speaking of the last Provisional Ministry: "At last a truly democratic government, born of the will of all classes of the Russian people, the first rough form of the future liberal

Ten Days That Shook the World

parliamentary régime, has been formed. Ahead of us is the Constituent Assembly, which will solve all questions of fundamental law, and whose composition will be essentially democratic. The function of the Soviets is at an end, and the time is approaching when they must retire, with the rest of the revolutionary machinery, from the stage of a free and victorious people, whose weapons shall hereafter be the peaceful ones of political action."

The leading article of *Izviestia* for October 23d was called, "The Crisis in the Soviet Organisations." It began by saying that travellers reported a lessening activity of local Soviets everywhere. "This is natural," said the writer. "For the people are becoming interested in the more permanent legislative organs—the Municipal Dumas and the Zemstvs.

"In the important centres of Petrograd and Moscow, where the Soviets were best organised, they did not take in all the democratic elements.... The majority of the intellectuals did not participate, and many workers also; some of the workers because they were politically backward, others because the centre of gravity for them was in their Unns.... We cannot deny that these organisations are firmly united with the masses, whose everyday needs are better served by them.

"That the local democratic administrations are being energetically organised is highly important. The City Dumas are elected by universal suffrage, and in purely local matters have more authority than the Soviets. Not a single democrat will see anything wrong in this.

"Elections to the Municipalities are being conducted in a better and more democratic way than the elections to the Soviets. All classes are represented in the Municipalities.... And as soon as the local Self-Governments begin to organise life in the Municipalities, the rôle of the local Soviets naturally ends.

"There are two factors in the falling off of interest in the Soviets. The first we may attribute to the lowering of political interest in the masses; the second, to the growing effort of provincial and local

John Reed

governing bodies to organise the building of new Russia.... The more the tendency lies in this latter direction, the sooner disappears the significance of the Soviets.

“We ourselves are being called the ‘undertaker’s’ of our own organisation. In reality, we ourselves are the hardest workers in constructing the new Russia.

“When autocracy and the whole bureaucratic régimeell, we set up the Soviets as a barracks in which all the democracy cod find temporary shelter. Now, instead of barracks, we are building the permanent edifice of a new system, and naturally the people will gradually leave the barracks for more comfortable quarters.”

[4] *Trotsky's Speech At The Council Of The Russian Republic* “The purpose of the Democratic Conference, which was called by the *Tsay-ee-kah*, was to do away with the irresponsible personal government which produced Kornilov, and to establish a responsible government which would be capable of finishing the war, and ensure the calling of the Constituent Assembly at the given time. In the meanwhile behind the back of the Democratic Conference, by trickery, by deals between Citizen Kerensky, the Cadets, and the leaders of the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary parties, we received the opposite result from the officially announced purpose. A power was created around which and in which we have open and secret Kornilovs playing leading parts. The irresponsibility of the Government is officially proclaimed, when it is announced that the Council of the Russian Republic is to be a *consultative* and not *legislative* body. In the eighth month of the Revolution, the irresponsible Government creates a cover for itself in this new edition of Bieligen’s Duma.

“The propertied classes have entered this Provision Council in a proportion which clearly shows, from elections all over the country, that many of them have no right here whatever. In spite of that the Cadet party, which until yesterday wanted the Provisional Government to be responsible to the State Duma—this same Cadet party secured the independence Assembly the propertied classes will no doubt have as

Ten Days That Shook the World

favourable position than they have in this Council, and they will not be able to be irresponsible to the Constituent Assembly.

“If the propertied classes were really getting ready for the Constituent Assembly six weeks from now, there could be no reason for establishing the irresponsibility of the Government at this time. The whole truth is that the bourgeoisie, which directs the policies of the Provisional Government, has for its aim to break the Constituent Assembly. At present this is the main purpose of the propertied classes, which control our entire national policy—external and internal. In the industrial, agrarian and supply departments the politics of the propertied classes, acting with the Government, increases the natural disorganisation caused by the war. The propertied classes, which are provoking a peasants’ revolt! The propertied classes, which are provoking civil war, and openly hold their course on the bony hand of hunger, with which they intend to overthrow the Revolution and finish with the Constituent Assembly!

“No less criminal also is the international policy of the bourgeoisie and its Government. After forty months of war, the capital is threatened with mortal danger. In reply to this arises a plan to move the Government to Moscow. The idea of abandoning the capital does not stir the indignation of the bourgeoisie. Just the opposite. It is accepted as a natural part of the general policy designed to promote counter-revolutionary conspiracy. . Instead of recognising that the salvation of the country lies in concluding peace, instead of throwing openly the idea of immediate peace to all the worn-out peoples, over the heads of diplomats and imperialists, and making the continuation of the war impossible,—the Provisional Government, by order of the Cadets, the Counter-Revolutionists and the Allied Imperialists, without sense, without purpose and without a plan, continues to drag on the murderous war, sentencing to useless death new hundreds of thousands of soldiers and sailors, and preparing to give up Petrograd, and to wreck the Revolution. At a time when Bolshevik soldiers and sailors are dying with other soldiers and sailors as a result of the mistakes and crimes of others, the so-called Supreme Commander (Kerensky) continues to

John Reed

suppress the Bolshevik press. The leading parties of the Council are acting as a voluntary cover for these policies.

“We, the faction of Social Democrats Bolsheviks, announce that with this Government of Treason to the People we have nothing in common. We have nothing in common with the work of these Murderers of the People which goes on behind official curtains. We refuse either directly or indirectly to cover up one day of this work. While Wilhelm’s troops are threatening Petrograd, the Government of Kerensky and Kornilov is preparing to run away from Petrograd and turn Moscow into a base of counter-revolution!

“We warn the Moscow workers and soldiers to be on their guard. Leaving this Council, we appeal to the manhood and wisdom of the workers, peasants and soldiers of all Russia. Petrograd is in danger! The Revolution is in danger! The Government has increased the danger—the ruling classes intensify it. Only the people themselves can save themselves and the country.

“We appeal to the people. Long live immediate, honest, democratic peace! All power to the Soviets! All land to the people! Long live the Constituent Assembly!”

^[5]“*Nakaz*” To Skobeliev

Resumé

(Passed by the *Tsay-ee-kah* and given to Skobeliev as an instruction for the representative of the Russian Revolutionary democracy at the Paris Conference.)

The peace treaty must be based on the principle, “No annexations, no indemnities, the right of self-determination of peoples.”

Territorial Problems

(1) Evacuation of German troops from invaded Russia. Full right of self-determination to Poland, Lithuania and Livonia.

Ten Days That Shook the World

- (2) For Turkish Armenia autonomy, and later complete self-determination, as soon as local Governments are established.
- (3) The question of Alsace-Lorraine to be solved by a plebiscite, after the withdrawal of all foreign troops.
- (4) Belgium to be restored. Compensation for damages from an international fund.
- (5) Serbia and Montenegro to be restored, and aided by an international relief fund. Serbia to have an outlet on the Adriatic. Bosnia and Herzegovina to be autonomous.
- (6) The disputed provinces in the Balkans to have provisional autonomy, followed by a plebiscite.
- (7) Rumania to be restored, but forced to give complete self-determination to the Dobrudja.... Rumania must be forced to execute the clauses of the Berlin Treaty concerning the Jews, and recognise them as Rumanian citizens.
- (8) In Italia Irridenta a provisional autonomy, followed by a plebiscite to determine state dependence.
- (9) The German colonies to be returned.
- (10) Greece and Persia to be restored.

Freedom of the Seas

All straits opening into inland seas, as well as the Suez and Panama Canals, are to be neutralised. Commercial shipping to be free. The right of privateering to be abolished. The torpedoing of commercial ships to be forbidden.

Indemnities

All combatants to renounce demands for any indemnities, either direct or indirect—as, for instance, charges for the maintenance of prisoners. Indemnities and contributions collected during the war must be refunded.

Economic Terms

Commercial treaties are not to be a part of the peace terms. Every country must be independent in its commercial relations, and must not be obliged to, or prevented from, concluding an economic treaty, by the Treaty of Peace. Nevertheless, all nations should bind themselves, by the Peace Treaty, not to practise an economic blockade after the war, nor to form separate tariff agreements. The right of most favoured nation must be given to all countries without distinction.

Guarantees of Peace

Peace is to be concluded at the Peace Conference by delegates elected by the national representative institutions of each country. The peace terms are to be confirmed by these parliaments.

Secret diplomacy is to be abolished; all parties are to bind themselves not to conclude any secret treaties. Such treaties are declared in contradiction to international law, and void. All treaties, until confirmed by the parliaments of the different nations, are to be considered void.

Gradual disarmament both on land and sea, and the establishment of a militia system. The "League of Nations" advanced by President Wilson may become a valuable aid to international law, provided that (a), all nations are to be obliged to participate in it with equal rights, and (b), international politics are to be democratised.

Ways to Peace

The Allies are to announce immediately that they are willing to open peace negotiations as soon as the enemy powers declare their consent to the renunciation of all forcible annexations.

The Allies must bind themselves not to begin any peace negotiations, nor to conclude peace, except in a general Peace

Ten Days That Shook the World

Conference with the participation of delegates from all the neutral countries.

All obstacles to the Stockholm Socialist Conference are to be removed, and passports are to be given immediately to all delegates of parties and organisations who wish to participate.

(The Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets also issued a *nakaz*, which differs little from the above.)

[6] *Peace At Russia's Expense* The Ribot revelations of Austria's peace-offer to France; the so-called "Peace Conference" at Berne, Switzerland, during the summer of 1917, in which delegates participated from all belligerent countries, representing large financial interests in all these countries; and the attempted negotiations of an English agent with a Bulgarian church dignitary; all pointed to the fact that there were strong currents, on both sides, favourable to patching up a peace at the expense of Russia. In my next book, "Kornilov to Brest-Litovsk," I intend to treat this matter at some length, publishing several secret documents discovered in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Petrograd.

[7] *Russian Soldiers In France*

Official Report of the Provisional Government.

"From the time the news of the Russian Revolution reached Paris, Russian newspapers of extreme tendencies immediately began to appear; and these newspapers, as well as individuals, freely circulated among the soldier masses and began a Bolshevik propaganda, often spreading false news which appeared in the French journals. In the absence of all official news, and of precise details, this campaign provoked discontent among the soldiers. The result was a desire to return to Russia, and a hatred toward the officers.

"Finally it all turned into rebellion. In one of their meetings, the soldiers issued an appeal to refuse to drill, since they had decided to

John Reed

fight no more. It was decided to isolate the rebels, and General Zankievitch ordered all soldiers loyal to the Provisional Government to leave the camp of Courtine, and to carry with them all ammunition. On June 25th the order was executed; there remained at the camp only the soldiers who said they would submit 'conditionally' to the Provisional Government. The soldiers at the camp of Courtine received several times the visit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies abroad, of Rapp, the Commissar of the Ministry of War, and of several distinguished former exiles who wished to influence them, but these attempts were unsuccessful, and finally Commissar Rapp insisted that the rebels lay down their arms, and, in sign of submission, march in good order to a place called Clairvaux. The order was only partially obeyed; first 500 men went out, of whom 22 were arrested; 24 hours later about 6,000 followed. About 2,000 remained,

"It was decided to increase the pressure; their rations were diminished, their pay was cut off, and the roads toward the village of Courtine were guarded by French soldiers. General Zankievitch, having discovered that a Russian artillery brigade was passing through France, decided to form a mixed detachment of infantry and artillery to reduce the rebels. A deputation was sent to the rebels; the deputation returned several hours later, convinced of the futility of the negotiations. On September 1st General Zankievitch sent an ultimatum to the rebels demanding that they lay down their arms, and menacing in case of refusal to open fire with artillery if the order was not obeyed by September 3d at 10 o'clock.

"The order not being executed, a light fire of artillery was opened on the place at the hour agreed upon. Eighteen shells were fired, and the rebels were warned that the bombardment would become more intense. In the night of September 3d 160 men surrendered. September 4th the artillery bombardment recommenced, and at 11 o'clock, after 36 shells had been fired, the rebels raised two white flags and began to leave the camp without arms. By evening 8,300 men had surrendered. 150 soldiers who remained in the camp opened fire with machine-guns that night. The 5th of September, to make an end of the affair, a heavy barrage was laid on the camp, and our soldiers occupied

Ten Days That Shook the World

it little by little. The rebels kept up a heavy fire with their machine-guns. September 6th, at 9 o'clock, the camp was entirely occupied.... After the disarmament of the rebels, 81 arrests were made.”

Thus the report. From secret documents discovered in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, we know that the account is not strictly accurate. The first trouble arose when the soldiers tried to form Committees, as their comrades in Russia were doing. They demanded to be sent back to Russia, which was refused; and then, being considered a dangerous influence in France, they were ordered to Salonika. They refused to go, and the battle followed.... It was discovered that they had been left in camp without officers for about two months, and badly treated, before they became rebellious. All attempts to find out the name of the “Russian artillery brigade” which had fired on them were futile; the telegrams discovered in the Ministry left it to be inferred that French artillery was used.

After their surrender, more than two hundred of the mutineers were shot in cold blood.

[8] Terestchenko's Speech

(Resumé)

“The questions of foreign policy are closely related to those of national defence. And so, if in questions of national defence you think it is necessary to hold session in secret, also in our foreign policy we are sometimes forced to observe the same secrecy.

“German diplomacy attempts to influence public opinion. Therefore the declarations of directors of great democratic organisations who talk loudly of a revolutionary Congress, and the impossibility of another winter campaign, are dangerous.... All these declarations cost human lives.

“I wish to speak merely of governmental logic, without touching the questions of the honour and dignity of the State. From the point of view of logic, the foreign policy of Russia ought to be based on a real

John Reed

comprehension of the *interests* of Russia. These interests mean that it is impossible that our country remain alone, and that the present alignment of forces with us, (the Allies), is satisfactory. All humanity longs for peace, but in Russia no one will permit a humiliating peace which would violate the State interests of our fatherland!”

The orator pointed out that such a peace would for long years, if not for centuries, retard the triumph of democratic principles in the world, and would inevitably cause new wars.

“All remember the days of May, when the fraternisation on our Front threatened to end the war by a simple cessation of military operations, and lead the country to a shameful separate peace. and what efforts it was necessary to use to make the soldier masses at the front understand that it was not by this method that the Russian State must end the war and guarantee its interest.”

He spoke of the miraculous effect of the July offensive, what strength it gave to the words of Russian ambassadors abroad, and the despair in Germany caused by the Russian victories. And also, the disillusionment in Allied countries which followed the Russian defeat.

“As to the Russian Government, it adhered strictly to the formula of May, ‘No annexations and no punitive indemnities.’ We consider it essential not only to proclaim the self-determination of peoples, but also to renounce imperialist aims.”

Germany is continually trying to make peace. The only talk in Germany is of peace; she knows she cannot win.

“I reject the reproaches aimed at the Government which allege that Russian foreign policy does not speak clearly enough about the aims of the war.

“If the question arises as to what ends the Allies are pursuing, it is indispensable first to demand what aims the Central Powers have agreed upon.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“The desire is often heard that we publish the details of the treaties which bind the Allies; but people forget that, up to now, we do not know the treaties which bind the Central Powers.”

Germany, he said, evidently wants to separate Russia from the West by a series of weak buffer-states.

“This tendency to strike at the vital interests of Russia must be checked.

“And will the Russian democracy, which has inscribed on its banner the rights of nations to dispose of themselves, allow calmly the continuation of oppression upon the most civilised peoples (in Austria-Hungary)?

“Those who fear that the Allies will try to profit by our difficult situation, to make us support more than our share of the burden of war, and to solve the questions of peace at our expense, are entirely mistaken.... Our enemy looks upon Russia as a market for its products. The end of the war will leave us in a feeble condition, and with our frontier open the flood of German products can easily hold back for years our industrial development. Measures must be taken to guard against this.

“I say openly and frankly: the combination of forces which unites us to the Allies is *favourable to the interests of Russia*.... It is therefore important that our views on the questions of war and peace shall be in accord with the views of the Allies as clearly and precisely as possible.... To avoid all misunderstanding, I must say frankly that Russia must present at the Paris Conference *one point of view*.”

He did not want to comment on the *nakaz* to Skobeliev, but he referred to the Manifesto of the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee, just published in Stockholm. This Manifesto declared for the autonomy of Lithuania and Livonia; “but that is clearly impossible,” said

John Reed

Terestchenko, “for Russia must have free ports on the Baltic all the year round.

“In this question the problems of foreign policy are also closely related to interior politics, for if there existed a strong sentiment of unity of all great Russia, one would not witness the repeated manifestations, everywhere, of a desire of peoples to separate from the Central Government.... Such separations are contrary to the interests of Russia, and the Russian delegates cannot raise the issue.”

^[9] *The British Fleet*. At the time of the naval battle of the Gulf of Riga, not only the Bolsheviki, but also the Ministers of the Provisional Government, considered that the British Fleet had deliberately abandoned the Baltic, as one indication of the attitude so often expressed publicly by the British press, and semi-publicly by British representatives in Russia, “Russia’s finished! No use bothering about Russia!”

See interview with Kerensky (Appendix 13).

General Gurko was a former Chief of Staff of the Russian armies under the Tsar. He was a prominent figure in the corrupt Imperial Court. After the Revolution, he was one of the very few persons exiled for his political and personal record. The Russian naval defeat in the Gulf of Riga coincided with the public reception, by King George in London, of General Gurko, a man whom the Russian Provisional Government considered dangerously pro-German as well as reactionary!

^[10] *Appeals Against Insurrection*

To Workers and Soldiers

“Comrades! The Dark Forces are increasingly trying to call forth in Petrograd and other towns DISORDERS AND *Pogroms*. Disorder is necessary to the Dark Forces, for disorder will give them an opportunity for crushing the revolutionary movement in blood. Under the pretext of establishing order, and of protecting the inhabitants, they hope to

Ten Days That Shook the World

establish the domination of Kornilov, which the revolutionary people succeeded in suppressing not long ago. Woe to the people if these hopes are realised! The triumphant counter-revolution will destroy the Soviets and the Army Committees, will disperse the Constituent Assembly, will stop the transfer of the land to the Land Committees, will put an end to all the hopes of the people for a speedy peace, and will fill all the prisons with revolutionary soldiers and workers.

“In their calculations, the counter-revolutionists and Black Hundred leaders are counting on the serious discontent of the unenlightened part of the people with the disorganisation of the food-supply, the continuation of the war, and the general difficulties of life. They hope to transform every demonstration of soldiers and workers into *apogrom*, which will frighten the peaceful population and throw it into the arms of the Restorers of Law and Order.

“Under such conditions every attempt to organise a demonstration in these days, although for the most laudable object, would be a crime. All conscious workers and soldiers who are displeased with the policy of the Government will only bring injury to themselves and to the Revolution if they indulge in demonstrations.

“THEREFORE THE *Tsay-ee-kah* ASKS ALL WORKERS NOT TO OBEY ANY CALLS TO DEMONSTRATE.

“WORKERS AND SOLDIERS! DO NOT YIELD TO PROVOCATION! REMEMBER YOUR DUTY TO YOUR COUNTRY AND TO THE REVOLUTION! DO NOT BREAK THE UNITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT BY DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH ARE BOUND TO BE UNSUCCESSFUL!”

The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (Tsay-ee-kah)

Russian Social Democratic Labour Party THE DANGER IS NEAR!

To All Workers and Soldiers

(Read and Hand to Others)

John Reed
Comrades Workers and Soldiers!

“Our country is in danger. On account of this danger our freedom and our Revolution are passing through difficult days. The enemy is at the gates of Petrograd. The disorganisation is growing with every hour. It becomes more and more difficult to obtain bread for Petrograd. All, of from the smallest to the greatest, must redouble their efforts, must endeavour to arrange things properly.... We must save our country, say freedom.... More arms and provisions for the Army! Bread—for the great cities. Order and organisation in the country.

“And in these terrible critical days rumours creep about that SOMEWHERE a demonstration is being prepared, that SOMEONE is calling on the soldiers and workers to destroy revolutionary peace and order. *Rabotchi Put*, the newspaper of the Bolsheviki, is pouring oil on the flames: it flattering, trying to please the unenlightened people, tempting the worker and soldiers, urging them on against the Government, promising them mountains of good things.... The confiding, ignorant men believe, they do not reason.... And from the other side come also rumours—rumours that the Dark Forces, the friends of the Tsar, the German spies, are rubbing their hands with glee. They are ready to join the Bolsheviki, and with them fan the disorders into civil war.

“The Bolsheviki and the ignorant soldiers and workers seduced by them cry senselessly: ‘Down with the Government! All power to the Soviets!’ And the Dark servants of the Tsar and the spies of Wilhelm will egg the on; ‘Beat the Jews, beat the shopkeepers, rob the markets, devastate the shops, pillage the wine stores! Slay, burn, rob!’

“And then will begin a terrible confusion, a war between one part of the people and the other. All will become still more disorganised, and perhaps once more blood will be shed on the streets of the capital. And then what then?

“Then, the road to Petrograd will be open to Wilhelm. Then, no bread will come to Petrograd, the children will die of hunger. Then, the

Ten Days That Shook the World

Army as the front will remain without support, our brothers in the trenches will be delivered to the fire of the enemy. Then, Russia will lose all prestige in other countries, our money will lose its value; everything will be so dear as to make life impossible. Then, the long awaited Constituent Assembly will be postponed—it will be impossible to convene it in time. And then—Death to the Revolution, Death to our Liberty.

“Is it this that you want, workers and soldiers? No! If you do not then go, go to the ignorant people seduced by the betrayers, and tell them the whole truth, which we have told you!

“Let all know that EVERY MAN WHO IN THESE TERRIBLE DAYS CALLS ON YOU TO COME OUT IN THE STREETS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, IS EITHER A SECRET SERVANT OF THE TSAR, A PROVOCATOR, OR AN UNWISE ASSISTANT OF THE ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE, OR A PAID SPY OF WILHELM!

“Every conscious worker revolutionist, every conscious peasant, every revolutionary soldier, all who understand what harm a demonstration or a revolt against the Government might cause to the people, must join together and not allow the enemies of the people to destroy our freedom.”

The Petrograd Electoral Committee of the Mensheviki-aborontzi.

^[11]*Lenin's "Letter To The Comrades"* This series of articles appeared in *Rabotchi Put* several days running, at the end of October and beginning of November, 1917. I give here only extracts from two instalments:

1. Kameniev and Riazanov say that we have not a majority among the people, and that without a majority insurrection is hopeless.

“Answer: People capable of speaking such things are falsifiers, pedants, or simply don't want to look the real situation in the face. In the last elections we received in all the country more than fifty percent of all the votes.

John Reed

“The most important thing in Russia to-day is the peasants’ revolution. In Tambov Government there has been a real agrarian uprising with wonderful political results. Even *Dielo Naroda* has been scared into yelling that the land must be turned over to the peasants, and not only the Socialist Revolutionaries in the Council of the Republic, but also the Government itself, has been similarly affected. Another valuable result was the bringing of bread which had been hoarded by the *pomieshtchiki* to the railroad stations in that province. The *Russkaya Volia* had to admit that the stations were filled with bread after the peasants’ rising.

“2. We are not sufficiently strong to take over the Government, and the bourgeoisie is not sufficiently strong to prevent the Constituent Assembly.

“Answer: This is nothing but timidity, expressed by pessimism as regards workers and soldiers, and optimism as regards the failure of the bourgeoisie. If *yunkers* and Cossacks say they will fight, you believe them; if workmen and soldiers say so, you doubt it. What is the distinction between such doubts and siding politically with the bourgeoisie?

“Kornilov proved that the Soviets were really a power. To believe Kerensky and the Council of the Republic, if the bourgeoisie is not strong enough to break the Soviets, it is not strong enough to break the Constituent. But that is wrong. The bourgeoisie will break the Constituent by sabotage, by lock-outs, by giving up Petrograd, by opening the front to the Germans. This has already been done in the case of Riga.

“3. The Soviets must remain a revolver at the head of the Government to force the calling of the Constituent Assembly, and to suppress any further Kornilov attempts.

“Answer: Refusal of insurrection is refusal of ‘All Power to the Soviets.’ Since September the Bolshevik party has been discussing the question of insurrection. Refusing to rise means to trust our hopes in the

Ten Days That Shook the World

faith of the good bourgeoisie, who have 'promised' to call the Constituent Assembly. When the Soviets have all the power, the calling of the Constituent is guaranteed, and its success assured.

"Refusal of insurrection means surrender to the 'Lieber-Dans.' Either we must drop 'All Power to the Soviets' or make an insurrection; there is no middle course."

"4. The bourgeoisie cannot give up Petrograd, although the Rodziankos want it, because it is not the bourgeoisie who are fighting, but our heroic soldiers and sailors.

"Answer: This did not prevent two admirals from running away at the Moonsund battle. The Staff has not changed; it is composed of Kornilovtsi. If the Staff, with Kerensky at its head, wants to give up Petrograd, it can do it doubly or trebly. It can make arrangements with the Germans or the British; open the fronts. It can sabotage the Army's food supply. At all these doors has it knocked.

"We have no right to wait until the bourgeoisie chokes the Revolution. Rodzianko is a man of action, who has faithfully and truthfully served the bourgeoisie for years.... Half the Lieber-Dans are cowardly compromisers; half of them simple fatalists...."

"5. We're getting stronger every day. We shall be able to enter the Constituent Assembly as a strong opposition. Then why should we play everything on one card?"

"Answer: This is the argument of a sophomore with no practical experience, who reads that the Constituent Assembly is being called and trustfully accepts the legal and constitutional way. Even the voting of the Constituent Assembly will not do away with hunger, or beat Wilhelm.... The issue of hunger and of surrendering Petrograd cannot be decided by waiting for the Constituent Assembly. Hunger is not waiting. The peasants' Revolution is not waiting. The Admirals who ran away did not wait.

John Reed

“Blind people are surprised that hungry people, betrayed by admirals and generals, do not take an interest in voting.

“6. If the Kornilovtsi make an attempt, we would show them our strength. But why should we risk everything by making an attempt ourselves?

“Answer: History doesn’t repeat. ‘Perhaps Kornilov will someday make an attempt!’ What a serious base for proletarian action! But suppose Kornilov waits for starvation, for the opening of the fronts, what then? This attitude means to build the tactics of a revolutionary party on one of the bourgeoisie’s former mistakes.

“Let us forget everything except that there is no way out but by the dictatorship of the proletariat—either that or the dictatorship of Kornilov.

“Let us wait, comrades, for—a miracle!”

[¹²] *Miliukov’s Speech (Resumé)* “Every one admits, it seems, that the defence of the country is our principal task, and that, to assure it, we must have discipline in the Army and order in the rear. To achieve this, there must be a power capable of daring, not only by persuasion, but also by force.... The germ of all our evils comes from the point of view, original, truly Russian, concerning foreign policy, which passes for the Internationalist point of view.

“The noble Lenin only imitates the noble Keroyevsky when he holds that from Russia will come the New World which shall resuscitate the aged West, and which will replace the old banner of doctrinaire Socialism by the new direct action of starving masses—and that will push humanity forward and force it to break in the doors of the social paradise.”

These men sincerely believed that the decomposition of Russia would bring about the decomposition of the whole capitalist régime. Starting from that point of view, they were able to commit the

Ten Days That Shook the World

unconscious treason, in wartime, of calmly telling the soldiers to abandon the trenches, and instead of fighting the external enemy, creating internal civil war and attacking the proprietors and capitalists.

Here Miliukov was interrupted by furious cries from the Left, demanding what Socialist had ever advised such action.

“Martov says that only the revolutionary pressure of the proletariat can condemn and conquer the evil will of imperialist cliques and break down the dictatorship of these cliques. Not by an accord between Governments for a limitation of armaments, but by the disarming of these Governments and the radical democratisation of the military system.”

He attacked Martov viciously, and then turned on the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries, whom he accused of entering the Government as Ministers with the avowed purpose of carrying on the class struggle!

“The Socialists of Germany and of the Allied countries contemplated these gentlemen with ill-concealed contempt, but they decided that it was for Russia, and sent us some apostles of the Universal Conflagration.

“The formula of our democracy is very simple; no foreign policy, no art of diplomacy, an immediate democratic peace, a declaration to the Allies, ‘We want nothing, we haven’t anything to fight with!’ And then our adversaries will make the same declaration, and the brotherhood of peoples will be accomplished!”

Miliukov took a fling at the Zimmerwald Manifesto, and declared that even Kerensky has not been able to escape the influence of “that unhappy document which will forever be your indictment.” He then attacked Skobeliev, whose position in foreign assemblies, where he would appear as a Russian delegate, yet opposed to the foreign policy of his Government, would be so strange that people would say, “What’s that gentleman carrying, and what shall we talk to him about?” As for

John Reed

the *nakaz*, Miliukov said that he himself was a pacifist; that he believed in the creation of an International Arbitration Board, and the necessity for a limitation of armaments, and parliamentary control over secret diplomacy, which did not mean the abolition of secret diplomacy.

As for the Socialist ideas in the *nakaz*, which he called “Stockholm ideas”—peace without victory, the right of self-determination of peoples, and renunciation of the economic war—“The German successes are directly proportionate to the successes of those who call themselves the revolutionary democracy. I do not wish to say, ‘to the successes of the Revolution,’ because I believe that the defeats of the revolutionary democracy are victories for the Revolution.

“The influence of the Soviet leaders abroad is not unimportant. One had only to listen to the speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to be convinced that, in this hall, the influence of the revolutionary democracy on foreign policy is so strong, that the Minister does not dare to speak face to face with it about the honour and dignity of Russia! “We can see, in the *nakaz* of the Soviets, that the ideas of the Stockholm Manifesto have been elaborated in two direction—that of Utopianism, and that of German interests.

Interrupted by the angry cries of the Left, and rebuked by the President, Miliukov insisted that the proposition of peace concluded by popular assemblies, not by diplomats, and the proposal to undertake peace negotiations as soon as the enemy had renounced annexations, were pro-German. Recently Kuhlman said that a personal declaration bound only him who made it. “Anyway, we will imitate the Germans before we will imitate the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.”

The sections treating of the independence of Lithuania and Livonia were symptoms of nationalist agitation in different parts of Russia, supported, said Miliukov, by German money. Amid bedlam from the Left, he contrasted the clauses of the *nakaz* concerning Alsace-Lorraine, Rumania, and Serbia, with those treating of the nationalities in Germany and Austria. The *nakaz* embraced the German and Austrian point of view, said Miliukov.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Passing to Terestchenko's speech, he contemptuously accused him of being afraid to speak the thought in his mind, and even afraid to think in terms of the greatness of Russia. The Dardanelles must belong to Russia.

"You are continually saying that the soldier does not know why he is fighting, and that when he does know, he'll fight. It is true that the soldier doesn't know why he is fighting, but now you have told him that there is no reason for him to fight, that we have no national interests, and that we are fighting for alien ends."

Paying tribute to the Allies, who, he said, with the assistance of America, "will yet save the cause of humanity," he ended:

"Long live the light of humanity, the advanced democracies of the West, who for a long time have been travelling the way we now only begin to enter, with ill-assured and hesitating steps! Long live our brave Allies!"

^[13] *Interview With Kerensky* The Associated Press man tried his hand. "Mr. Kerensky," he began, "in England and France people are disappointed with the Revolution—"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Kerensky, quizzically. "Abroad the Revolution is no longer fashionable!"

"What is your explanation of why the Russians have stopped fighting?"

"That is a foolish question to ask." Kerensky was annoyed. "Russia entered the war first of all the Allies, and for a long time she bore the whole brunt of it. Her losses have been inconceivably greater than those of all the other nations put together. Russia has now the right to demand of the Allies that they bring greater force of arms to bear." He stopped for a moment and stared at his interlocutor. "You are asking why the Russians have stopped fighting, and the Russians are

John Reed

asking where is the British fleet—with German battleships in the Gulf of Riga?” Again he ceased suddenly, and as suddenly burst out. “The Russian Revolution hasn’t failed and the revolutionary Army hasn’t failed. It is not the Revolution which caused disorganisation in the army—that disorganisation was accomplished years ago, by the old regime. Why aren’t the Russians fighting? I will tell you. Because the masses of the people are economically exhausted,—and because they are disillusioned with the Allies!”

The interview of which this is an excerpt was cabled to the United States, and in a few days sent back by the American State Department, with a demand that it be “altered.” This Kerensky refused to do; but it was done by his secretary, Dr. David Soskice—and, thus purged of all offensive references to the Allies, was given to the press of the world.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Chapter 3 On the Eve

IN the relations of a weak Government and a rebellious people there comes a time when every act of the authorities exasperates the masses, and every refusal to act excites their contempt.

The proposal to abandon Petrograd raised a hurricane; Kerensky's public denial that the Government had any such intention was met with hoots of derision.

Pinned to the wall by the pressure of the Revolution (cried *Rabotchi Put*), the Government of "provisional" bourgeois tries to get free by giving out lying assurances that it never thought of fleeing from Petrograd, and that it didn't wish to surrender the capital.

In Kharkov thirty thousand coal miners organised, adopting the preamble of the I.W.W. constitution: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Dispersed by Cossacks, some were locked out by the mine-owners, and the rest declared a general strike. Minister of Commerce and Industry Konovalov appointed his assistant, Orlov, with plenary powers, to settle the trouble. Orlov was hated by the miners. But the *Tsay-ee-kah* not only supported his appointment, but refused to demand that the Cossacks be recalled from the Don Basin.

This was followed by the dispersal of the Soviet at Kaluga. The Bolsheviki, having secured a majority in the Soviet, set free some political prisoners. With the sanction of the Government Commissar the Municipal Duma called in troops from Minsk, and bombarded the Soviet headquarters with artillery. The Bolsheviki yielded, but as they left the building Cossacks attacked them, crying, "This is what we'll do to all the other Bolshevik Soviets, including those of Moscow and Petrograd!" This incident sent a wave of panic rage throughout Russia.

In Petrograd was ending a regional Congress of Soviets of the North, presided over by the Bolshevik Krylenko. By an immense majority

John Reed

it resolved that all power should be assumed by the All-Russian Congress; and concluded by greeting the Bolsheviki in prison, bidding them rejoice, for the hour of their liberation was at hand. At the same time the first All-Russian Conference of Factory-Shop Committees^[1] declared emphatically for the Soviets, and continued significantly.

After liberating themselves politically from Tsardom, the working-class wants to see the democratic régime triumphant in the sphere of its productive activity. This is best expressed by Workers' Control over industrial production, which naturally arose in the atmosphere of economic decomposition created by the criminal policy of the dominating classes.

The Union of Railwaymen was demanding the resignation of Liverovsky, Minister of Ways and Communications.

In the name of the *Tsay-ee-kah*, Skobeliev insisted that the *nakaz* be presented at the Allied Conference, and formally protested against the sending of Terestchenko to Paris. Terestchenko offered to resign.

General Verkhovsky, unable to accomplish his reorganisation of the army, only came to Cabinet meetings at long intervals.

On November 3rd Burtzev's *Obshtchee Dielo* came out with great headlines:

Citizens! Save the fatherland!

I have just learned that yesterday, at a meeting of the Commission for National Defence, Minister of War General Verkhovsky, one of the principal persons responsible for the fall of Kornilov, proposed to sign a separate peace, independently of the Allies.

That is treason to Russia!

Ten Days That Shook the World

Terestchenko declared that the Provisional Government had not even examined Verkhovsky's proposition.

"You might think," said Terestchenko, "that we were in a madhouse!"

The members of the Commission were astounded at the

General's words.

General Alexeyev wept.

No! It is not madness! It is worse. It is direct treason to Russia! Kerensky, Terestchenko and Nekrassov must immediately answer us concerning the words of Verkhovsky.

Citizens, arise! Russia is being sold! Save her!

What Verkhovsky really said was that the Allies must be pressed to offer peace, because the Russian army could fight no longer.

Both in Russia and abroad the sensation was tremendous. Verkhovsky was given "indefinite leave of absence for ill health," and left the Government. *Obshtchee Dielo* was suppressed.



Bolshevik soldiers demonstrate in the streets of Petrograd, November 1917.

Sunday, November 4th, was designated as the Day of the Petrograd Soviet, with immense meetings planned all over the city, ostensibly to raise money for the organisation and the press; really, to make a demonstration of strength. Suddenly it was announced

John Reed

that on the same day the Cossacks would hold a *Krestny Khod*—Procession of the Cross—in honour of the Ikon of 1612, through whose miraculous intervention Napoleon had been driven from Moscow. The atmosphere was electric; a spark might kindle civil war. The Petrograd Soviet issued a manifesto, headed “Brothers—Cossacks!”

You, Cossacks, are being incited against us, workers and soldiers. This plan of Cain is being put into operation by our common enemies, the oppressors, the privileged classes—generals, bankers, landlords, former officials, former servants of the Tsar. We are hated by all grafters, rich men, princes, nobles, generals, including your Cossack generals. They are ready at any moment to destroy the Petrograd Soviet and crush the Revolution.

On the 4th of November somebody is organising a Cossack religious procession. It is a question of the free consciousness of every individual whether he will or will not take part in this procession. We do not interfere in this matter, nor do we obstruct anybody. However, we warn you, Cossacks! Look out and see to it that under the pretext of a *Krestni Khod*, your Kaledins do not instigate you against workmen, against soldiers.

The procession was hastily called off.

In the barracks and the working-class quarters of the town the Bolsheviks were preaching, “All Power to the Soviets!” and agents of the Dark Forces were urging the people to rise and slaughter the Jews, shop-keepers, Socialist leaders.

On one side the Monarchist press, inciting to bloody repression—on the other Lenin’s great voice roaring, “Insurrection!. We cannot wait any longer!”

Even the bourgeois press was uneasy. ^[2] *Birjevya Viedomosti* (Exchange Gazette) called the Bolshevik propaganda an attack on “the most elementary principles of society—personal security and the respect for private property.” Appeal of the Petrograd Soviet to the Cossacks to

Ten Days That Shook the World

call off their *Krestny Khod*—the religious procession planned for November 4th (our calendar). “Brothers—Cossacks!” it begins. “The Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies addresses you.”

But it was the “moderate” Socialist journals which were the most hostile.^[3] “The Bolsheviki are the most dangerous enemies of the Revolution,” declared *Dielo Naroda*. Said the Menshevik *Dien*, “The Government ought to defend itself and defend us.” Plekhanov’s paper, *Yedinstvo* (Unity)^[4], called the attention of the Government to the fact that the Petrograd workers were being armed, and demanded stern measures against the Bolsheviki.

Daily the Government seemed to become more helpless. Even the Municipal administration broke down. The columns of the morning papers were filled with accounts of the most audacious robberies and murders, and the criminals were unmolested.

On the other hand armed workers patrolled the streets at night, doing battle with marauders and requisitioning arms wherever they found them.



Photo of Georgy Petrovich Polkovnikov, Russian colonel, commander of the Petrograd Military District - Sept. 1917

On the first of November Colonel Polkovnikov, Military Commander of Petrograd, issued a proclamation:

Despite the difficult days through which the country is passing, irresponsible appeals to armed demonstrations and massacres are still being spread around Petrograd, and from day to day robbery and disorder increase.

John Reed

This state of things is disorganising the life of the citizens, and hinders the systematic work of the Government and the Municipal Institutions.

In full consciousness of my responsibility and my duty before my country, I command:

1. Every military unit, in accordance with special instructions and within the territory of its garrison, to afford every assistance to the Municipality, to the Commissars, and to the militia, in the guarding of Government institutions.
2. The organisation of patrols, in cooperation with the District Commander and the representatives of the city militia, and the taking of measures for the arrest of criminals and deserters.
3. The arrest of all persons entering barracks and inciting to armed demonstrations and massacres, and their delivery to the headquarters of the Second Commander of the city.
4. To suppress any armed demonstration or riot at its start, with all armed forces at hand.
5. To afford assistance to the Commissars in preventing unwarranted searches in houses and unwarranted arrests.
6. To report immediately all that happens in the district under charge to the Staff of the Petrograd Military District.

I call upon all Army Committees and organisations to afford their help to the commanders in fulfilment of the duties with which they are charged.

In the Council of the Republic Kerensky declared that the Government was fully aware of the Bolshevik preparations, and had sufficient force to cope with any demonstration.^[5] He accused *Novaya Rus* and *Robotchi Put* of both doing the same kind of subversive work.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“But owing to the absolute freedom of the press,” he added, “the Government is not in a position to combat printed lies.

1.” Declaring that these were two aspects of the same propaganda, which had for its object the counter-revolution, so ardently desired by the Dark Forces, he went on:

“I am a doomed man, it doesn’t matter what happens to me, and I have the audacity to say that the other enigmatic part is that of the unbelievable provocation created in the city by the Bolsheviki!”


On November 2d only fifteen delegates to the Congress of Soviets had arrived. Next day there were a hundred, and the morning after that a hundred and seventy-five, of whom one hundred and three were Bolsheviki. Four hundred constituted a quorum, and the Congress was only three days off.

I spent a great deal of time at Smolny. It was no longer easy to get in. Double rows of sentries guarded the outer gates, and once inside the front door there was a long line of people waiting to be let in, four at a time, to be questioned as to their identity and their business. Passes were given out, and the pass system was changed every few hours; for spies continually sneaked through ...

John Reed

Военно-Революцион.
Комитетъ
при
ПЕТР. С. Р. и С. Д.
Командантскій отдѣлъ.
16 ноября 1917 г.
№ 955
СМОЛЬНЫЙ Институтъ.

Пропускъ.
Дано, сие *John Reedу*
Карел. а. пер. сов. през.
срокомъ по *1 декабря*
на право свободного входа въ СМОЛЬ-
ный Институтъ.
Командантъ *Ф. Озерский*
Дьялопроизводитель



One day as I came up to the outer gate I saw Trotzky and his wife just ahead of me. They were halted by a soldier. Trotzky searched through his pockets, but could find no pass.

“Never mind,” he said finally. “You know me. My name is Trotzky.”

“You haven’t got a pass,” answered the soldier stubbornly.

“You cannot go in. Names don’t mean anything to me.”

“But I am the president of the Petrograd Soviet.”

“Well,” replied the soldier, “if you’re as important a fellow as that you must at least have one little paper.”

Trotzky was very patient. “Let me see the Commandant,” he said. The soldier hesitated, grumbling something about not wanting to disturb the Commandant for every devil that came along. He beckoned finally to the soldier in command of the guard. Trotzky explained matters to him. “My name is Trotzky,” he repeated.

Ten Days That Shook the World

"Trotzky?" The other soldier scratched his head. "I've heard the name somewhere," he said at length. "I guess it's all right. You can go on in, comrade."



Lev Karakhan

In the corridor I met Karakhan, member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, who explained to me what the new Government would be like.

"A loose organisation, sensitive to the popular will as expressed through the Soviets, allowing local forces full play. At present the Provisional Government obstructs the action of the local democratic will, just as the Tsar's Government did. The initiative of the new society shall come from below. The form of the Government will be modelled on the Constitution of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. The new *Tsay-ee-kah*, responsible to frequent meetings of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, will be the parliament; the various Ministries will be headed by *collegia*—committees—instead of by Ministers, and will be directly responsible to the Soviets.

On October 30th, by appointment, I went up to a small, bare room in the attic of Smolny, to talk with Trotzky. In the middle of the room he sat on a rough chair at a bare table. Few questions from me were necessary; he talked rapidly and steadily, for more than an hour. The substance of his talk, in his own words, I give here:

"The Provisional Government is absolutely powerless. The bourgeoisie is in control, but this control is masked by a fictitious coalition with the *oborontsi* parties. Now, during the Revolution, one sees revolts of peasants who are tired of waiting for their promised land; and all over the country, in all the toiling classes, the same

John Reed

disgust is evident. This domination by the bourgeoisie is only possible by means of civil war. The Kornilov method is the only way by which the bourgeoisie can control. But it is force which the bourgeoisie lacks. The Army is with us. The conciliators and pacifists, Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, have lost all authority—because the struggle between the peasants and the landlords, between the workers and the employers, between the soldiers and the officers, has become more bitter, more irreconcilable than ever. Only by the concerted action of the popular mass, only by the victory of proletarian dictatorship, can the Revolution be achieved and the people saved.

“The Soviets are the most perfect representatives of the people—perfect in their revolutionary experience, in their ideas and objects. Based directly upon the army in the trenches, the workers in the factories, and the peasants in the fields, they are the backbone of the Revolution.

“There has been an attempt to create a power without the Soviets—and only powerlessness has been created. Counter-revolutionary schemes of all sorts are now being hatched in the corridors of the Council of the Russian Republic. The Cadet party represents the counter-revolution militant. On the other side, the Soviets represent the cause of the people. Between the two camps there are no groups of serious importance. It is the *lutte finale*. The bourgeois counter-revolution organises all its forces and waits for the moment to attack us. Our answer will be decisive. We will complete the work scarcely begun in March, and advanced during the Kornilov affair.” He went on to speak of the new Government’s foreign policy:

“Our first act will be to call for an immediate armistice on all fronts, and a conference of peoples to discuss democratic peace terms. The quantity of democracy we get in the peace settlement depends on the quantity of revolutionary response there is in Europe. If we create here a Government of the Soviets, that will be a powerful factor for immediate peace in Europe; for this Government will address itself directly and immediately to all peoples, over the heads of their Governments, proposing an armistice. At the moment of the conclusion

Ten Days That Shook the World

of peace the pressure of the Russian Revolution will be in the direction of 'no annexations, # no indemnities, the right of self-determination of peoples,' and a *Federated Republic of Europe*.—

“At the end of this war I see Europe recreated, not by the diplomats, but by the proletariat. The Federated Republic of Europe—the United States of Europe—that is what must be. National autonomy no longer suffices. Economic evolution demands the abolition of national frontiers. If Europe is to remain split into national groups, then Imperialism will recommence its work. Only a Federated Republic of Europe can give peace to the world.” He smiled—that fine, faintly ironical smile of his. “But without the action of the European masses, these ends cannot be realised—now.”

Now while everybody was waiting for the Bolsheviki to appear suddenly on the streets one morning and begin to shoot down people with white collars on, the real insurrection took its way quite naturally and openly.

The Provisional Government planned to send the Petrograd garrison to the front.

The Petrograd garrison numbered about sixty thousand men, who had taken a prominent part in the Revolution. It was they who had turned the tide in the great days of March, created the Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies, and hurled back Kornilov from the gates of Petrograd.

Now a large part of them were Bolsheviki. When the Provisional Government talked of evacuating the city, it was the Petrograd garrison which answered, “If you are not capable of defending the capital, conclude peace; if you cannot conclude peace, go away and make room for a People's Government which can do both.”

It was evident that any attempt at insurrection depended upon the attitude of the Petrograd garrison. The Government's plan was to replace the garrison regiments with “dependable” troops—Cossacks,

John Reed

Death Battalions. The Army Committees, the “moderate” Socialists and the *Tsay-ee-kah* supported the Government. A wide-spread agitation was carried on at the Front and in Petrograd, emphasizing the fact that for eight months the Petrograd garrison had been leading an easy life in the barracks of the capital, while their exhausted comrades in the trenches starved and died.

Naturally there was some truth in the accusation that the garrison regiments were reluctant to exchange their comparative comfort for the hardships of a winter campaign. But there were other reasons why they refused to go. The Petrograd Soviet feared the Government’s intentions, and from the Front came hundreds of delegates, chosen by the common soldiers, crying, “It is true we need reinforcements, but more important, we must know that Petrograd and the Revolution are well-guarded. Do you hold the rear, comrades, and we will hold the front!”

On October 25th, behind closed doors, the Central Committee of the Petrograd Soviet discussed the formation of a special Military Committee to decide the whole question. The next day a meeting of the Soldiers’ Section of the Petrograd Soviet elected a Committee, which immediately proclaimed a boycott of the bourgeois newspapers, and condemned the *Tsay-ee-kah* for opposing the Congress of Soviets. On the 29th, in open session of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotzky proposed that the Soviet formally sanction the Military Revolutionary Committee. “We ought,” he said, “to create our special organisation to march to battle, and if necessary to die.” It was decided to send to the front two delegations, one from the Soviet and one from the garrison, to confer with the Soldiers’ Committees and the General Staff.

At Pskov, the Soviet delegates were met by General Tcheremissov, commander of the Northern Front, with the curt declaration that he had ordered the Petrograd garrison to the trenches, and that was all. The garrison committee was not allowed to leave Petrograd.

Ten Days That Shook the World

A delegation of the Soldiers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet asked that a representative be admitted to the Staff of the Petrograd District. Refused. The Petrograd Soviet demanded that no orders be issued without the approval of the Soldiers' Section. Refused. The delegates were roughly told, "We only recognise the *Tsay-ee-kah*. We do not recognise you; if you break any laws, we shall arrest you."

On the 30th a meeting of representatives of all the Petrograd regiments passed a resolution: "*The Petrograd garrison no longer recognises the Provisional Government. The Petrograd Soviet is our Government. We will obey only the orders of the Petrograd Soviet, through the Military Revolutionary Committee.*" The local military units were ordered to wait for instructions from the Soldiers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet.

Next day the *Tsay-ee-kah* summoned its own meeting, composed largely of officers, formed a Committee to cooperate with the Staff, and detailed Commissars in all quarters of the city.

A great soldier meeting at Smolny on the 3d resolved:

Saluting the creation of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the Petrograd garrison promises it complete support in all its actions, to unite more closely the front and the rear in the interests of the Revolution.

The garrison moreover declares that with the revolutionary proletariat it assures the maintenance of revolutionary order in Petrograd. Every attempt at provocation on the part of the Kornilovtsi or the bourgeoisie will be met with merciless resistance.

Now conscious of its power, the Military Revolutionary Committee peremptorily summoned the Petrograd Staff to submit to its control. To all printing plants it gave orders not to publish any appeals or proclamations without the Committee's authorisation. Armed Commissars visited the Kronversk arsenal and seized great quantities of

John Reed

arms and ammunition, halting a shipment of ten thousand bayonets which was being sent to Novotcherkask, headquarters of Kaledin.

Suddenly awake to the danger, the Government offered immunity if the Committee would disband. Too late. At midnight November 5th Kerensky himself sent Malevsky to offer the Petrograd Soviet representation on the Staff. The Military Revolutionary Committee accepted. An hour later General Manikovsky, acting Minister of war, countermanded the offer.

Tuesday morning, November 6th, the city was thrown into excitement by the appearance of a placard signed, "Military Revolutionary Committee attached to the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."

To the Population of Petrograd. Citizens!

Counter-revolution has raised its criminal head. The Kornilovtsi are mobilising their forces in order to crush the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and break the Constituent Assembly. At the same time the *pogromists* may attempt to call upon the people of Petrograd for trouble and bloodshed. The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies takes upon itself the guarding of revolutionary order in the city against counter-revolutionary and *pogrom* attempts.

The Petrograd garrison will not allow any violence or disorders. The population is invited to arrest hooligans and Black Hundred agitators and take them to the Soviet Commissars at the nearest barracks. At the first attempt of the Dark Forces to make trouble on the streets of Petrograd, whether robbery or fighting, the criminals will be wiped off the face of the earth!

Citizens! We call upon you to maintain complete quiet and self-possession. The cause of order and Revolution is in strong hands. List of regiments where there are Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Ten Days That Shook the World

On the 3rd the leaders of the Bolsheviki had another historic meeting behind closed doors. Notified by Zalkind, I waited in the corridor outside the door; and Volodarsky as he came out told me what was going on.

Lenin spoke: "November 6th will be too early. We must have an all-Russian basis for the rising; and on the 6th all the delegates to the Congress will not have arrived. On the other hand, November 8th will be too late. By that time the Congress will be organised, and it is difficult for a large organised body of people to take swift, decisive action. We must act on the 7th, the day the Congress meets, so that we may say to it, 'Here is the power! What are you going to do with it?'"

In a certain upstairs room sat a thin-faced, long-haired individual, once an officer in the armies of the Tsar, then revolutionist and exile, a certain Avseenko, called Antonov, mathematician and chess-player; he was drawing careful plans for the seizure of the capital.

On its side the Government was preparing. Inconspicuously certain of the most loyal regiments, from widely-separated divisions, were ordered to Petrograd. The *yunker* artillery was drawn into the Winter Palace. Patrols of Cossacks made their appearance in the streets, for the first time since the July days. Polkovnikov issued order after order, threatening to repress all insubordination with the "utmost energy." Kishkin, Minister of Public Instruction, the worst hated member of the Cabinet, was appointed Special Commissar to keep order in Petrograd; he named as assistants two men no less unpopular, Rutenberg and Paltchinsky. Petrograd, Cronstadt and Finland were declared in a state of siege—upon which the bourgeois *Novoye Vremya* (New Times) remarked ironically:

Why the state of siege? The Government is no longer a power. It has no moral authority and it does not possess the necessary apparatus to use force. In the most favourable circumstances it can only negotiate with any one who consents to parley. Its authority goes no farther.

John Reed

Monday morning, the 5th, I dropped in at the Marinsky Palace, to see what was happening in the Council of the Russian Republic. Bitter debate on Terestchenko's foreign policy. Echoes of the Burtzev-Verkhovski affair. All the diplomats present except the Italian ambassador, who everybody said was prostrated by the Carso disaster. As I came in, the Left Socialist Revolutionary Karelin was reading aloud an editorial from the London *Times* which said, "The remedy for Bolshevism is bullets!" Turning to the Cadets he cried, "That's what *you* think, too!"

Voices from the Right, "Yes! Yes!"

"Yes, I know you think so," answered Karelin, hotly. "But you haven't the courage to try it!"

Then Skobeliev, looking like a *matinée* idol with his soft blond beard and wavy yellow hair, rather apologetically defending the Soviet *nakaz*. Terestchenko followed, assailed from the Left by cries of "Resignation! Resignation!" He insisted that the delegates of the Government and of the *Tsay-ee-kah* to Paris should have a common point of view—his own. A few words about the restoration of discipline in the army, about war to victory. Tumult, and over the stubborn opposition of the truculent Left, the Council of the Republic passed to the simple order of the day.

There stretched the rows of Bolshevik seats—empty since that first day when they left the Council, carrying with them so much life. As I went down the stairs it seemed to me that in spite of the bitter wrangling, no real voice from the rough world outside could penetrate this high, cold hall, and that the Provisional Government was wrecked—on the same rock of War and Peace that had wrecked the Miliukov Ministry. The doorman grumbled as he put on my coat, "I don't know what is becoming of poor Russia. All these Mensheviki and Bolsheviki and Trudoviki. This Ukraine and this Finland and the German imperialists and the English imperialists. I am forty-five years old, and in all my life I never heard so many words as in this place."

Ten Days That Shook the World



Stanislav Shatskii (alternative spelling Shatsky) (1878-1934) was an important humanistic educator, writer, and educational administrator in the late Russian Empire and the early Soviet Union.

In the corridor I met Professor Shatsky, a rat-faced individual in a dapper frock-coat, very influential in the councils of the Cadet party. I asked him what he thought of the much-talked-of Bolshevik *vystuplennie*. He shrugged, sneering.

“They are cattle—*canaille*,” he answered. “They will not dare, or if they dare they will soon be sent flying. From our point of view it will not be bad, for then they will ruin themselves and have no power in the Constituent Assembly.

“But, my dear sir, allow me to outline to you my plan for a form of Government to be submitted to the Constituent Assembly. You see, I am chairman of a commission appointed from this body, in conjunction with the Provisional Government, to work out a constitutional project. We will have a legislative assembly of two chambers, such as you have in the United States. In the lower chamber will be territorial representatives; in the upper, representatives of the liberal professions, zemstvos, Cooperatives—and Trade Unions.”

Outside a chill, damp wind came from the west, and the cold mud underfoot soaked through my shoes. Two companies of *yunkers* passed swinging up the Morskaya, tramping stiffly in their long coats and singing an old-time crashing chorus, such as the soldiers used to sing under the Tsar. At the first cross-street I noticed that the City Militiamen were mounted, and armed with revolvers in bright new holsters; a little group of people stood silently staring at them. At the corner of the Nevsky I bought a pamphlet by Lenin, “Will the Bolsheviki be Able to Hold the Power?” paying for it with one of the stamps which

John Reed

did duty for small change. The usual street-cars crawled past, citizens and soldiers clinging to the outside in a way to make Theodore P. Shonts green with envy. Along the sidewalk a row of deserters in uniform sold cigarettes and sunflower seeds.

Up the Nevsky in the sour twilight crowds were battling for the latest papers, and knots of people were trying to make out the multitudes of appeals^[6] and proclamations pasted in every flat place; from the *Tsay-ee-kah*, the Peasants' Soviets, the "moderate" Socialist parties, the Army Committees—threatening, cursing, beseeching the workers and soldiers to stay home, to support the Government.

An armoured automobile went slowly up and down, siren screaming. On every corner, in every open space, thick groups were clustered; arguing soldiers and students. Night came swiftly down, the wide-spaced street-lights flickered on, the tides of people flowed endlessly. It is always like that in Petrograd just before trouble.

The city was nervous, starting at every sharp sound. But still no sign from the Bolsheviks; the soldiers stayed in the barracks, the workmen in the factories. We went to a moving picture show near the Kazan Cathedral—a bloody Italian film of passion and intrigue. Down front were some soldiers and sailors, staring at the screen in childlike wonder, totally unable to comprehend why there should be so much violent running about, and so much homicide.

From there I hurried to Smolny. In room 10 on the top floor, the Military Revolutionary Committee sat in continuous session, under the chairmanship of a tow-headed, eighteen-year-old boy named Lazimir. He stopped, as he passed, to shake hands rather bashfully.

"Peter-Paul Fortress has just come over to us," said he, with a pleased grin. "A minute ago we got word from a regiment that was ordered by the Government to come to Petrograd. The men were suspicious, so they stopped the train at Gatchina and sent a delegation to us. 'What's the matter?' they asked. 'What have you got to say? We have just passed a resolution, "All Power to the Soviets.'"— The Military Revolutionary Committee sent back word, 'Brothers! We greet you in

Ten Days That Shook the World

the name of the Revolution. Stay where you are until further instructions!”

All telephones, he said, were cut off: but communication with the factories and barracks was established by means of military telephonograph apparatus.

A steady stream of couriers and Commissars came and went. Outside the door waited a dozen volunteers, ready to carry word to the farthest quarters of the city. One of them, a gypsy-faced man in the uniform of a lieutenant, said in French, “Everything is ready to move at the push of a button.”

There passed Podvoisky, the thin, bearded civilian whose brain conceived the strategy of insurrection; Antonov, unshaven, his collar filthy, drunk with loss of sleep; Krylenko, the squat, wide-faced soldier, always smiling, with his violent gestures and tumbling speech; and Dybenko, the giant bearded sailor with the placid face. These were the men of the hour—and of other hours to come.

Downstairs in the office of the Factory-Shop Committees sat Seratov, signing orders on the Government Arsenal for arms—one hundred and fifty rifles for each factory. Delegates waited in line, forty of them.

In the hall I ran into some of the minor Bolshevik leaders. One showed me a revolver. “The game is on,” he said, and his face was pale. “Whether we move or not the other side knows it must finish us or be finished.”

The Petrograd Soviet was meeting day and night. As I came into the great hall Trotzky was just finishing.

“We are asked,” he said, “if we intend to have a *vystuplennie*. I can give a clear answer to that question. The Petrograd Soviet feels that at last the moment has arrived when the power must fall into the hands of the Soviets. This transfer of government will be accomplished by the All-Russian Congress. Whether an armed demonstration is

John Reed

necessary will depend on— those who wish to interfere with the All-Russian Congress.

“We feel that our Government, entrusted to the personnel of the Provisional Cabinet, is a pitiful and helpless Government, which only awaits the sweep of the broom of History to give way to a really popular Government. But we are trying to avoid a conflict, even now, to-day. We hope that the All-Russian Congress will take— into its hands that power and authority which rests upon the organised freedom of the people. If, however, the Government wants to utilise the short period it is expected to live—twenty-four, forty eight, or seventy-two hours—to attack us, then we shall answer with counter-attacks, blow for blow, steel for iron!”^[7]

Amid cheers he announced that the Left Socialist Revolutionaries had agreed to send representatives into the Military Revolutionary Committee.

As I left Smolny, at three o'clock in the morning, I noticed that two rapid-firing guns had been mounted, one on each side of the door, and that strong patrols of soldiers guarded the gates and the nearby street-corners. Bill Shatov^[2] came bounding up the steps. “Well,” he cried, “We’re off! Kerensky sent the *yunkers* to close down our papers, *Soldat* and *Rabotchi Put*. But our troops went down and smashed the Government seals, and now we’re sending detachments to seize the bourgeois newspaper offices!” Exultantly he slapped me on the shoulder, and ran in.

On the morning of the 6th I had business with the censor, whose office was in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Everywhere, on all the walls, hysterical appeals to the people to remain “calm.” Polkovnikov emitted *prikaz* after *prikaz*:

I order all military units and detachments to remain in their barracks until further orders from the Staff of the Military District. All officers who act without orders from their superiors will be court-

Ten Days That Shook the World

martialed for mutiny. I forbid absolutely any execution by soldiers of instructions from other organisations.

The morning papers announced that the Government had suppressed the papers *Novaya Rus*, *Zhivoye Slovo*, *Rabotchi Put* and *Soldat*, and decreed the arrest of the leaders of the Petrograd Soviet and the members of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

As I crossed the Palace Square several batteries of *yunker* artillery came through the Red Arch at a jingling trot, and drew up before the Palace. The great red building of the General Staff was unusually animated, several armoured automobiles ranked before the door, and motors full of officers were coming and going. The censor was very much excited, like a small boy at a circus. Kerensky, he said, had just gone to the Council of the Republic to offer his resignation. I hurried down to the Marinsky Palace, arriving at the end of that passionate and almost incoherent speech of Kerensky's, full of self-justification and bitter denunciation of his enemies.

"I will cite here the most characteristic passage from a whole series of articles published in *Rabotchi Put* by Ulianov-Lenin, a state criminal who is in hiding and whom we are trying to find. This state criminal has invited the proletariat and the Petrograd garrison to repeat the experience of the 16th-18th of July, and insists upon the immediate necessity for an armed rising. Moreover, other Bolshevik leaders have taken the floor in a series of meetings, and also made an appeal to immediate insurrection. Particularly should be noticed the activity of the present president of the Petrograd Soviet, Bronstein-Trotsky.

"I ought to bring to your notice— that the expressions and the style of a whole series of articles in *Rabotchi Put* and *Soldat* resemble absolutely those of *Novaya Rus*. . . . We have to do not so much with the movement of such and such political party, as with the exploitation of the political ignorance and criminal instincts of a part of the population, a sort of organisation whose object it is to provoke in Russia, cost what it may, an inscient movement of destruction and pillage; for given the state of mind of the masses, any movement at

John Reed

Petrograd will be followed by the most terrible massacres, which will cover with eternal shame the name of free Russia.

“By the admission of Ulianov-Lenin himself, the situation of the extreme left wing of the Social Democrats in Russia is very favourable.” (Here Kerensky read the following quotation from Lenin’s article.):

Think of it!— The German comrades have only one Liebknecht, without newspapers, without freedom of meeting, without a Soviet. They are opposed by the incredible hostility of all classes of society—and yet the German comrades try to act; while we, having dozens of newspapers, freedom of meeting, the majority of the Soviets, we, the best-placed international proletarians of the entire world, can we refuse to support the German revolutionists and insurrectionary organisations?

Kerensky then continued:

“The organisers of rebellion recognise thus implicitly that the most perfect conditions for the free action of a political party obtain now in Russia, administered by a Provisional Government at the head of which is, in the eyes of this party, ‘a usurper and a man who has sold himself to the bourgeoisie, the Minister-President Kerensky.’

“The organisers of the insurrection do not come to the aid of the German proletariat, but of the German governing classes, and they open the Russian front to the iron fists of Wilhelm and his friends. Little matter to the Provisional Government the motives of these people, little matter if they act consciously or unconsciously; but in any case, from this tribune, in full consciousness of my responsibility, I qualify such acts of a Russian political party as acts of treason to Russia!

“I place myself at the point of view of the Right, and I propose immediately to proceed to an investigation and make the necessary arrests.” (Uproar from the Left.) “Listen to me!” he cried in a powerful voice. “At the moment when the state is in danger, because of conscious or unconscious treason, the Provisional Government, and

Ten Days That Shook the World

myself among others, prefer to be killed rather than betray the life, the honour and the independence of Russia.”

At this moment a paper was handed to Kerensky.

“I have just received the proclamation which they are distributing to the regiments. Here is the contents.” Reading: “*‘The Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies is menaced. We order immediately the regiments to mobilise on a war footing and to await new orders. All delay or non-execution of this order will be considered as an act of treason to the Revolution. The Military Revolutionary Committee. For the President, Podvoisky. The Secretary, Antonov.’*

“In reality, this is an attempt to raise the populace against the existing order of things, to break the Constituent and to open the front to the regiments of the iron fist of Wilhelm.

“I say ‘populace’ intentionally, because the conscious democracy and its *Tsay-ee-kah*, all the Army organisations, all that free Russia glorifies, the good sense, the honour and the conscience of the great Russian democracy, protests against these things.

“I have not come here with a prayer, but to state my firm conviction that the Provisional Government, which defends at this moment our new liberty—that the new Russian state, destined to a brilliant future, will find unanimous support except among those who have never dared to face the truth.

“The Provisional Government has never violated the liberty of all citizens of the State to use their political rights. But now the Provisional Government. declares: in this moment those elements of the Russian nation, those groups and parties who have dared to lift their hands against the free will of the Russian people, at the same time threatening to open the front to Germany, must be liquidated with decision!

John Reed

“Let the population of Petrograd understand that it will encounter a firm power, and perhaps at the last moment good sense, conscience and honour will triumph in the hearts of those who still possess them.”

All through this speech, the hall rang with deafening clamour. When the Minister-President had stepped down, pale-faced and wet with perspiration, and strode out with his suite of officers, speaker after speaker from the Left and Centre attacked the Right, all one angry roaring. Even the Socialist Revolutionaries, through Gotz:

“The policy of the Bolsheviki is demagogic and criminal, in their exploitation of the popular discontent. But there is a whole series of popular demands which have received no satisfaction up to now. The questions of peace, land and the democratization of the army ought to be stated in such a fashion that no soldier, peasant or worker would have the least doubt that our Government is attempting, firmly and infallibly, to solve them.

“We Mensheviki do not wish to provoke a Cabinet crisis, and we are ready to defend the Provisional Government with all our energy, to the last drop of our blood—if only the Provisional Government, on all these burning questions, will speak the clear and precise words awaited by the people with such impatience.”

Then Martov, furious:

“The words of the Minister-President, who allowed himself to speak of ‘populace’ when it is question of the movement of important sections of the proletariat and the army—although led in the wrong direction—are nothing but an incitement to civil war.”

The order of the day proposed by the Left was voted. It amounted practically to a vote of lack of confidence.

1. The armed demonstration which has been preparing for some days past has for its object a *coup d’etat*, threatens to provoke civil war,

Ten Days That Shook the World

creates conditions favourable to *pogroms* and counterrevolution, the mobilization of counter-revolutionary forces, such as the Black Hundreds, which will inevitably bring about the impossibility of convoking the Constituent, will cause a military catastrophe, the death of the Revolution, paralyse the economic life of the country and destroy Russia;

2. The conditions favourable to this agitation have been created by delay in passing urgent measures, as well as objective conditions caused by the war and the general disorder. It is necessary before everything to promulgate at once a decree transmitting the land to the peasants' Land Committees, and to adopt an energetic course of action abroad in proposing to the Allies to proclaim their peace terms and to begin peace-parleys;

3. To cope with Monarchist manifestations and *pogromist* movements, it is indispensable to take immediate measures to suppress these movements, and for this purpose to create at Petrograd a Committee of Public Safety, composed of representatives of the Municipality and the organs of the revolutionary democracy, acting in contact with the Provisional Government.

It is interesting to note that the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries all rallied to this resolution. When Kerensky saw it, however, he summoned Avksentiev to the Winter Palace to explain. If it expressed a lack of confidence in the Provisional Government, he begged Avksentiev to form a new Cabinet. Dan, Gotz and Avksentiev, the leaders of the "compromisers," performed their last compromise. They explained to Kerensky that it was not meant as a criticism of the Government!

At the corner of the Morskaya and the Nevsky, squads of soldiers with fixed bayonets were stopping all private automobiles, turning out the occupants, and ordering them toward the Winter Palace. A large crowd had gathered to watch them. Nobody knew whether the soldiers belonged to the Government or the Military Revolutionary Committee. Up in front of the Kazan Cathedral the same thing was happening,

John Reed

machines being directed back up the Nevsky. Five or six sailors with rifles came along, laughing excitedly, and fell into conversation with two of the soldiers. On the sailors' hat bands were *Avrora* and *Zaria Svobody*,—the names of the leading Bolshevik cruisers of the Baltic Fleet. One of them said, "Cronstadt is coming!"— It was as if, in 1792, on the streets of Paris, someone had said: "The Marseillais are coming!" For at Cronstadt were twenty-five thousand sailors, convinced Bolsheviks and not afraid to die.

Rabotchi i Soldat was just out, all its front page one huge proclamation:

SOLDIERS! WORKERS! CITIZENS!

The enemies of the people passed last night to the offensive. The Kornilovists of the Staff are trying to draw in from the suburbs *yunkers* and volunteer battalions. The Oranienbaum *yunkers* and the Tsarskoye Selo volunteers refused to come out. A stroke of high treason is being contemplated against the Petrograd Soviet. The campaign of the counter-revolutionists is being directed against the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the eve of its opening, against the Constituent Assembly, against the people. The Petrograd Soviet is guarding the Revolution. The Military Revolutionary Committee is directing the repulse of the conspirators' attack. The entire garrison and proletariat of Petrograd are ready to deal the enemy of the people a crushing blow.

The Military Revolutionary Committee decrees:

1. All regimental, division and battle-ship Committees, together with the Soviet Commissars, and all revolutionary organisations, shall meet in continuous session, concentrating in their hands all information about the plans of the conspirators.
2. Not one soldier shall leave his division without permission of the Committee.

Ten Days That Shook the World

3. To send to Smolny at once two delegates from each military unit and five from each Ward Soviet.

4. All members of the Petrograd Soviet and all delegates to the All-Russian Congress are invited immediately to Smolny for an extraordinary meeting.

Counter-revolution has raised its criminal head.

A great danger threatens all the conquests and hopes of the soldiers and workers.

But the forces of the Revolution by far exceed those of its enemies.

The cause of the People is in strong hands. The conspirators will be crushed.

No hesitation or doubts! Firmness, steadfastness, discipline, determination!

Long live the Revolution!

The Military Revolutionary Committee.

The Petrograd Soviet was meeting continuously at Smolny, a centre of storm, delegates falling down asleep on the floor and rising again to take part in the debate, Trotzky, Kameniev, Volodarsky speaking six, eight, twelve hours a day.

I went down to room 18 on the first floor where the Bolshevik delegates were holding caucus, a harsh voice steadily booming, the speaker hidden by the crowd: "The compromisers say that we are isolated. Pay no attention to them. Once it begins they must be dragged along with us, or else lose their following."

Here he held up a piece of paper. "We are dragging them! A message has just come from the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries! They say that they condemn our action, but that if the

John Reed

Government attacks us they will not oppose the cause of the proletariat!" Exultant shouting.

As night fell the great hall filled with soldiers and workmen, a monstrous dun mass, deep-humming in a blue haze of smoke. The old *Tsay-ee-kah* had finally decided to welcome the delegates to that new Congress which would mean its own ruin—and perhaps the ruin of the revolutionary order it had built. At this meeting, however, only members of the *Tsay-ee-kah* could vote.

It was after midnight when Gotz took the chair and Dan rose to speak, in a tense silence, which seemed to me almost menacing.

"The hours in which we live appear in the most tragic colours," he said. "The enemy is at the gates of Petrograd, the forces of the democracy are trying to organise to resist him, and yet we await bloodshed in the streets of the capital, and famine threatens to destroy, not only our homogeneous Government, but the Revolution itself.

"The masses are sick and exhausted. They have no interest in the Revolution. If the Bolsheviki start anything, that will be the end of the Revolution—" (Cries, "That's a lie!") "The counter-revolutionists are waiting with the Bolsheviki to begin riots and massacres. If there is any *vystuplennie*, there will be no Constituent Assembly." (Cries, "Lie! Shame!")

"It is inadmissible that in the zone of military operations the Petrograd garrison shall not submit to the orders of the Staff. You must obey the orders of the Staff and of the *Tsay-ee-kah* elected by you. All Power to the Soviets—that means death! Robbers and thieves are waiting for the moment to loot and burn. When you have such slogans put before you, 'Enter the houses, take away the shoes and clothes from the bourgeoisie—'" (Tumult. Cries, "No such slogan! A lie! A lie!") "Well, it may start differently, but it will end that way!

Ten Days That Shook the World

"The *Tsay-ee-kah* has full power to act, and must be obeyed. We are not afraid of bayonets. The *Tsay-ee-kah* will defend the Revolution with its body." (Cries, "It was a dead body long ago!")

Immense continued uproar, in which his voice could be heard screaming, as he pounded the desk, "Those who are urging this are committing a crime!"

Voice: "You committed a crime long ago, when you captured the power and turned it over to the bourgeoisie!"

Gotz, ringing the chairman's bell: "Silence, or I'll have you put out!"

Voice: "Try it!" (Cheers and whistling.)

"Now concerning our policy about peace." (Laughter.) "Unfortunately Russia can no longer support the continuation of the war. There is going to be peace, but not permanent peace—not a democratic peace. To-day, at the Council of the Republic, in order to avoid bloodshed, we passed an order of the day demanding the surrender of the land to the Land Committees and immediate peace negotiations." (Laughter, and cries, "Too late!")

Then for the Bolsheviki, Trotzky mounted the tribune, borne on a wave of roaring applause that burst into cheers and a rising house, thunderous. His thin, pointed face was positively Mephistophelian in its expression of malicious irony.

"Dan's tactics prove that the masses—the great, dull, indifferent masses—are absolutely with him!" (Titantic mirth.) He turned toward the chairman, dramatically. "When we spoke of giving the land to the peasants, you were against it. We told the peasants, 'If they don't give it to you, take it yourselves!' and the peasants followed our advice. And now you advocate what we did six months ago.

John Reed

"I don't think Kerensky's order to suspend the death penalty in the army was dictated by his ideals. I think Kerensky was persuaded by the Petrograd garrison, which refused to obey him.

"To-day Dan is accused of having made a speech in the Council of the Republic which proves him to be a secret Bolshevik. The time may come when Dan will say that the flower of the Revolution participated in the rising of July 16th and 18th. In Dan's resolution to-day at the Council of the Republic there was no mention of enforcing discipline in the army, although that is urged in the propaganda of his party.

"No. The history of the last seven months shows that the masses have left the Mensheviks. The Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries conquered the Cadets, and then when they got the power, they gave it to the Cadets.

"Dan tells you that you have no right to make an insurrection. Insurrection is the right of all revolutionists! When the downtrodden masses revolt, it is their right."

Then the long-faced, cruel-tongued Lieber, greeted with groans and laughter.

"Engels and Marx said that the proletariat had no right to take power until it was ready for it. In a bourgeois revolution like this, the seizure of power by the masses means the tragic end of the Revolution. Trotzky, as a Social Democratic theorist, is himself opposed to what he is now advocating." (Cries, "Enough! Down with him!")

Martov, constantly interrupted: "The Internationalists are not opposed to the transmission of power to the democracy, but they disapprove of the methods of the Bolsheviks. This is not the moment to seize the power."

Again Dan took the floor, violently protesting against the action of the Military Revolutionary Committee, which had sent a Commissar to

Ten Days That Shook the World

seize the office of *Izvestia* and censor the paper. The wildest uproar followed. Martov tried to speak, but could not be heard. Delegates of the Army and the Baltic Fleet stood up all over the hall, shouting that the Soviet was *their* Government.

Amid the wildest confusion Ehrlich offered a resolution, appealing to the workers and soldiers to remain calm and not to respond to provocations to demonstrate, recognising the necessity of immediately creating a Committee of Public Safety, and asking the Provisional Government at once to pass decrees transferring the land to the peasants and beginning peace negotiations.

Then up leaped Volodarsky, shouting harshly that the *Tsay-ee-kah*, on the eve of the Congress, had no right to assume the functions of the Congress. The *Tsay-ee-kah* was practically dead, he said, and the resolution was simply a trick to bolster up its waning power.

“As for us, Bolsheviki, we will not vote on this resolution!” Whereupon all the Bolsheviki left the hall and the resolution was passed.

Toward four in the morning I met Zorin in the outer hall, a rifle slung from his shoulder.

“We’re moving!” said he, calmly but with satisfaction. “We pinched the Assistant Minister of Justice and the Minister of Religions. They’re down cellar now. One regiment is on the march to capture the Telephone Exchange, another the Telegraph Agency, another the State Bank. The Red Guard is out.”



On the steps of Smolny, in the chill dark, we first saw the Red Guard—a huddled group of boys in workman's clothes,

John Reed

carrying guns with bayonets, talking nervously together.

Far over the still roofs westward came the sound of scattered rifle fire, where the *yunkers* were trying to open the bridges over the Neva, to prevent the factory workers and soldiers of the Viborg quarter from joining the Soviet forces in the centre of the city; and the Cronstadt sailors were closing them again.

Behind us great Smolny, bright with lights, hummed like a gigantic hive.

Footnotes

^[1]*Resolution Of The Factory-Shop Committees*

Workers' Control

1. See reference in Chapter II
2. The organisation of Workers' Control is a manifestation of the same healthy activity in the sphere of industrial production, as are party organisations in the sphere of politics, trade unions in employment, Cooperatives in the domain of consumption, and literary clubs in the sphere of culture.
3. The working-class has much more interest in the proper and uninterrupted operation of factories. than the capitalist class. Workers' Control is a better security in this respect for the interests of modern society, of the whole people, than the arbitrary will of the owners, who are guided only by their selfish desire for material profits or political

Ten Days That Shook the World

privileges. Therefore Workers' Control is demanded by the proletariat not only in their own interest, but in the interest of the whole country, and should be supported by the revolutionary peasantry as well as the revolutionary Army.

4. Considering the hostile attitude of the majority of the capitalist class toward the Revolution, experience shows that proper distribution of raw materials and fuel, as well as the most efficient management of factories, is impossible without Workers' Control.

5. Only Workers' Control over capitalist enterprises, cultivating the workers' conscious attitude toward work, and making clear its social meaning, can create conditions favourable to the development of a firm self-discipline in labour, and the development of all labour's possible productivity.

6. The impending transformation of industry from a war to a peace basis, and the redistribution of labour all over the country, as well as among the different factories, can be accomplished without great disturbances only by means of the democratic self-government of the workers themselves.... Therefore the realisation of Workers' Control is an indispensable preliminary to the demobilisation of industry.

7. In accordance with the slogan proclaimed by the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviki), Workers' Control on a national scale, in order to bring results, must extend to all capitalist concerns, and not be organised accidentally, without system; it must be well-planned, and not separated from the industrial life of the country as a whole.

8. The economic life of the country—agriculture, industry, commerce and transport—must be subjected to one unified plan, constructed so as to satisfy the individual and social requirements of the wide masses of the people; it must be approved by their elected representatives, and carried out under the direction of these representatives by means of national and local organisations.

John Reed

9. That part of the plan which deals with land-labour must be carried out under supervision of the peasants' and land-workers' organisations; that relating to industry, trade and transport operated by wage-earners, by means of Workers' Control; the natural organs of Workers' Control inside the industrial plant will be the Factory-Shop and similar Committees; and in the labour market, the Trade Unions.

10. The collective wage agreements arranged by the Trade Unions for the majority of workers in any branch of labour, must be binding on all the owners of plants employing this kind of labour in the given district.

11. Employment bureaus must be placed under the control and management of the Trade Unions, as class organisations acting within the limits of the whole industrial plan, and in accordance with it.

12. Trade Unions must have the right, upon their own initiative, to begin legal action against all employers who violate labour contracts or labour legislation, and also in behalf of any individual worker in any branch of labour.

13. On all questions relating to Workers' Control over production, distribution and employment, the Trade Unions must confer with the workers of individual establishments through their Factory-Shop Committees.

14. Matters of employment and discharge, vacations, wage scales, refusal of work, degree of productivity and skill, reasons for abrogating agreements, disputes with the administration, and similar problems of the internal life of the factory, must be settled exclusively according to the findings of the Factory-Shop Committee, which has the right to exclude from participation in the discussion any members of the factory administration.

15. The Factory-Shop Committee forms a commission to control the supplying of the factory with raw materials, fuel, orders, labour power and technical staff (including equipment), and all other supplies and arrangements, and also to assure the factory's adherence to the general

Ten Days That Shook the World

industrial plan. The factory administration is obliged to surrender to the organs of Workers' Control, for their aid and information, all data concerning the business; to make it possible to verify this data, and to produce the books of the company upon demand of the Factory-Shop Committee.

16. Any illegal acts on the part of the administration discovered by the Factory-Shop Committees, or any suspicion of such illegal acts, which cannot be investigated or remedied by the workers alone, shall be referred to the district central organisation of Factory-Shop Committees charged with the particular branch of labour involved, which shall discuss the matter with the institutions charged with the execution of the general industrial plan, and find means to deal with the matter, even to the extent of confiscating the factory.

17. The union of the Factory-Shop Committees of different concerns must be accomplished on the basis of the different trades, in order to facilitate control over the whole branch of industry, so as to come within the general industrial plan; and so as to create an effective plan of distribution among the different factories of orders, raw materials, fuel, technical and labour power; and also to facilitate cooperation with the Trade Unions, which are organised by trades.

18. The central city councils of Trade Unions and Factory-Shop Committees represent the proletariat in the corresponding provincial and local institutions formed to elaborate and carry out the general industrial plan, and to organise economic relations between the towns and the villages (workers and peasants). They also possess final authority for the management of Factory-Shop Committees and Trade Unions, so far as Workers' Control in their district is concerned, and they shall issue obligatory regulations concerning workers' discipline in the routine of production—which regulations, however, must be approved by vote of the workers themselves.

^[2]*The Bourgeois Press On The Bolsheviki Russkaya Volia*, October 28. "The decisive moment approached. It is decisive for the Bolsheviki. Either they will give us a second edition of the events of July 16-18, or

John Reed

they will have to admit that with their plans and intentions, with their impertinent policy of wishing to separate themselves from everything consciously national, they have been definitely defeated.

“What are the chances of Bolshevik success?

“It is difficult to answer that question, for their principal support is the ignorance of the popular masses. They speculate on it, they work upon it by a demagoguery which nothing can stop.

“The Government must play its part in this affair. Supporting itself morally by the Council of the Republic, the Government must take a clearly-defined attitude toward the Bolsheviks.

“And if the Bolsheviks provoke an insurrection against the legal power, and thus facilitate the German invasion, they must be treated as mutineers and traitors.”

Birzhevy Vedomosti, October 28. “Now that the Bolsheviks have separated themselves from the rest of the democracy, the struggle against them is very much simpler—and it is not reasonable, in order to fight against Bolshevism, to wait until they make a manifestation. The Government should not even allow the manifestation.

“The appeals of the Bolsheviks to insurrection and anarchy are acts punishable by the criminal courts, and in the freest countries, their authors would receive severe sentences. For what the Bolsheviks are carrying on is not a political struggle against the Government, or even for the power; it is propaganda for anarchy, massacres, and civil war. This propaganda must be extirpated at its roots; it would be strange to wait, in order to begin action against an agitation for *pogroms*, until the *pogroms* actually occurred.”

Novoye Vremya, November 1. “... Why is the Government excited only about November 2d (date of calling of the Congress of Soviets), and not about September 12th, or October 3d?

Ten Days That Shook the World

“This is not the first time that Russia burns and falls in ruins, and that the smoke of the terrible conflagration makes the eyes of our Allies smart.

“Since it came to power, has there been a single order issued by the Government for the purpose of halting anarchy, or has anyone attempted to put out the Russian conflagration?

“There were other things to do.

“The Government turned its attention to a more immediate problem. It crushed an insurrection (the Kornilov attempt) concerning which every one is now asking, ‘Did it ever exist?’

^[3]*Moderate Socialist Press On The Bolsheviki Dielo Naroda*, October 28 (Socialist Revolutionary). “The most frightful crime of the Bolsheviki against the Revolution is that they impute exclusively to the bad intentions of the revolutionary Government all the calamities which the masses are so cruelly suffering; when as a matter of fact these calamities spring from objective causes.

“They make golden promises to the masses, knowing in advance that they can fulfil none of them; they lead the masses on a false trail, deceiving them as to the source of all their troubles.

“The Bolsheviki are the most dangerous enemies of the Revolution.”

Dien, October 30 (Menshevik). “Is this really ‘the freedom of the press’? Everyday *Novaya Rus* and *Rabotchi Put* openly incite to insurrection. Every day these two papers commit in their columns actual crimes. Every day they urge *pogroms*. Is that ‘the freedom of the press’?

“The Government ought to defend itself and defend us. We have the right to insist that the Government machinery does not remain passive while the threat of bloody riots endangers the lives of its citizens.”

John Reed

^[4]*Yedinstvo* Plekhanov's paper, *Yedinstvo*, suspended publication a few weeks after the Bolsheviki seized the power. Contrary to popular report, *Yedinstvo* was not suppressed by the Soviet Government; an announcement in the last number admitted that it was unable to continue *because there were too few subscribers....*

^[5] *Were The Bolsheviki Conspirators?* The French newspaper *Entente* of Petrograd, on November 15th, published an article of which the following is a part:

"The Government of Kerensky discusses and hesitates. The Government of Lenin and Trotzky attacks and acts.

"This last is called a Government of Conspirators, but that is wrong. Government of usurpers, yes, like all revolutionary Governments which triumph over their adversaries. Conspirators—no!

"No! They did not conspire. On the contrary, openly, audaciously, without mincing words, without dissimulating their intentions, they multiplied their agitation, intensified their propaganda in the factories, the barracks, at the Front, in the country, everywhere, even fixing in advance the date of their taking up arms, the date of their seizure of the power.

"*They—conspirators? Never.*"

^[6]*Appeal Against Insurrection From the Central Army Committee* ". Above everything we insist upon the inflexible execution of the organised will of the majority of the people, expressed by the Provisional Government in accord with the Council of the Republic and the *Tsay-ee-kah*, as organ of the popular power.

"Any demonstration to depose this power by violence, at a moment when a Government crisis will infallibly create disorganisation, the ruin of the country, and civil war, will be considered by the Army as a counter-revolutionary act, and repressed by force of arms.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“The interests of private groups and classes should be submitted to a single interest—that of augmenting industrial production, and distributing the necessities of life with fairness.

“All who are capable of sabotage, disorganisation, or disorder, all deserters, all slackers, all looters, should be forced to do auxiliary service in the rear of the Army.

“We invite the Provisional Government to form, out of these violators of the people’s will, these enemies of the Revolution, labour detachments to work in the rear, on the Front, in the trenches under enemy fire.”

[7]*Events Of The Night, November 6th* Toward evening bands of Red Guards began to occupy the printing shops of the bourgeois press, where they printed *Rabotchi Put*, *Soldat*, and various proclamations by the hundred thousand. The City Militia was ordered to clear these places, but found the offices barricaded, and armed men defending them. Soldiers who were ordered to attack the print-shops refused.

About midnight a Colonel with a company of *yunkers* arrived at the club “Free Mind,” with a warrant to arrest the editor of *Rabotchi Put*. Immediately an enormous mob gathered in the street outside and threatened to lynch the *yunkers*. The Colonel thereupon begged that he and the *yunkers* be arrested and taken to Peter-Paul prison for safety. This request was granted.

At 1 A. M. a detachment of soldiers and sailors from Smolny occupied the Telegraph Agency. At 1.35 the Post Office was occupied. Toward morning the Military Hotel was taken, and at 5 o’clock the Telephone Exchange. At dawn the State Bank was surrounded. And at 10 A. M. a cordon of troops was drawn about the Winter Palace.

John Reed

Chapter 4 The Fall of the Provisional Government

WEDNESDAY, November 7th, I rose very late. The noon cannon boomed from Peter-Paul as I went down the Nevsky. It was a raw, chill day. In front of the State Bank some soldiers with fixed bayonets were standing at the closed gates.

“What side do you belong to?” I asked. “The Government?”

“No more Government,” one answered with a grin, “*Slava Bogu!* Glory to God!” That was all I could get out of him.

The street-cars were running on the Nevsky, men, women and small boys hanging on every projection. Shops were open, and there seemed even less uneasiness among the street crowds than there had been the day before. A whole crop of new appeals against insurrection had blossomed out on the walls during the night - to the peasants, to the soldiers at the front, to the workmen of Petrograd. One read:

FROM THE PETROGRAD MUNICIPAL DUMA:

The Municipal Duma informs the citizens that in the extraordinary meeting of November 6th the Duma formed a Committee of Public Safety, composed of members of the Central and Ward Dumas, and representatives of the following revolutionary democratic organizations: The *Tsay-ee-kah*, the All-Russian Executive Committee of Peasant Deputies, the Army organisations, the *Tsentroflot*, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (!), the Council of Trade Unions, and others.

Members of the Committee of Public Safety will be on duty in the building of the Municipal Duma. Telephones No. 15-40, 223-77, 138-36. November 7th, 1917.

Though I didn't realize it then, this was the Duma's declaration of war against the Bolsheviki.

Ten Days That Shook the World

I bought a copy of *Rabotchi Put*, the only newspaper which seemed on sale, and a little later paid a soldier fifty kopeks for a second-hand copy of *Dien*. The Bolshevik paper, printed on large-sized sheets in the conquered office of the *Russkaya Volia*, had huge headlines: "ALL POWER - TO THE SOVIETS OF WORKERS, SOLDIERS AND PEASANTS! PEACE! BREAD! LAND!" The leading article was signed "Zinoviev," - Lenin's companion in hiding. It began:

Every soldier, every worker, every real Socialist, every honest democrat realises that there are only two alternatives to the present situation.

Either - the power will remain in the hands of the bourgeois-landlord crew, and this will mean every kind of repression for the workers, soldiers and peasants, continuation of the war, inevitable hunger and death.

Or - the power will be transferred to the hands of the revolutionary workers, soldiers and peasants; and in that case it will mean a complete abolition of landlord tyranny, immediate check of the capitalists, immediate proposal of a just peace. Then the land is assured to the peasants, then control of industry is assured to the workers, then bread is assured to the hungry, then the end of this nonsensical war!

Dien contained fragmentary news of the agitated night. Bolsheviks capture of the Telephone Exchange, the Baltic station, the Telegraph Agency; the Peterhof *yunkers* unable to reach Petrograd; the Cossacks undecided; arrest of some of the Ministers; shooting of Chief of the City Militia Meyer; arrests, counter-arrests, skirmishes between clashing patrols of soldiers, *yunkers* and Red Guards. ^[1]

On the corner of the Morskaya I ran into Captain Gomborg, Menshevik *oboronetz*, secretary of the Military Section of his party. When I asked him if the insurrection had really happened he shrugged his shoulders in a tired manner and replied, "*Tchort znayet!* The devil knows! Well, perhaps the Bolsheviks can seize the power, but they

John Reed

won't be able to hold it more than three days. They haven't the men to run a government. Perhaps it's a good thing to let them try - that will furnish them."



The Military Hotel at the corner of St. Isaac's Square was picketed by armed sailors. In the lobby were many of the smart young officers, walking up and down or muttering together; the sailors wouldn't let them leave.

Suddenly came the sharp crack of a rifle outside, followed by a scattered burst of firing. I ran out. Something unusual was going on around the Marinsky Palace, where the Council of the Russian Republic met. Diagonally across the wide square was drawn a line of soldiers, rifles ready, staring at the hotel roof.

"*Provacatzia!* Shot at us!" snapped one, while another went running toward the door.

At the western corner of the Palace lay a big armoured car with a red flag flying from it, newly lettered in red paint: "*S.R.S.D.*" (*Soviet Rabotchikh Soldatskikh Deputatov*); all the guns trained toward St. Isaac's. A barricade had been heaped up across the mouth of Novaya Ulitza - boxes, barrels, an old bed-spring, a wagon. A pile of lumber barred the end of the Moika quay. Short logs from a neighbouring wood-pile were being built up along the front of the building to form breastworks.

"Is there going to be any fighting?" I asked.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“Soon, soon,” answered a soldier, nervously. “Go away, comrade, you’ll get hurt. They will come from that direction,” pointing toward the Admiralty.

“Who will?”

“That I couldn’t tell you, brother,” he answered, and spat.

Before the door of the Palace was a crowd of soldiers and sailors. A sailor was telling of the end of the Council of the Russian Republic. “We walked in there,” he said, “and filled all the doors with comrades. I went up to the counter-revolutionist Kornilovitz who sat in the president’s chair. ‘No more Council,’ I says. ‘Run along home now!’”

There was laughter. By waving assorted papers I managed to get around to the door of the press gallery. There an enormous smiling sailor stopped me, and when I showed my pass, just said, “If you were Saint Michael himself, comrade, you couldn’t pass here!” Through the glass of the door I made out the distorted face and gesticulating arms of a French correspondent, locked in.



Around in front stood a little, grey-moustached man in the uniform of a general, the centre of a knot of soldiers. He was very red in the face.

Mikhail Alekseyev, circa 1917

“I am General Alexeyev,” he cried. “As your superior officer and as a member of the Council of the Republic I demand to be allowed to pass!” The guard scratched his head,

looking uneasily out of the corner of his eye; he beckoned to an approaching officer, who grew very agitated when he saw who it was and saluted before he realised what he was doing.

John Reed

“*Vashe Vuisokoprevoskhoditelstvo* - your High Excellency —” he stammered, in the manner of the old régime, “Access to the Palace is strictly forbidden - I have no right .”

An automobile came by, and I saw Gotz sitting inside, laughing apparently with great amusement. A few minutes later another, with armed soldiers on the front seat, full of arrested members of the Provisional Government. Peters, Lettish member of the Military Revolutionary Committee, came hurrying across the Square.

“I thought you bagged all those gentlemen last night,” said I, pointing to them.

“Oh,” he answered, with the expression of a disappointed small boy. “The damn fools let most of them go again before we made up our minds.”

Down the Voskressensky Prospect a great mass of sailors were drawn up, and behind them came marching soldiers, as far as the eye could reach.

We went toward the Winter Palace by way of the Admiralteisky. All the entrances to the Palace Square were closed by sentries, and a cordon of troops stretched clear across the western end, besieged by an uneasy throng of citizens. Except for far-away soldiers who seemed to be carrying wood out of the Palace courtyard and piling it in front of the main gateway, everything was quiet.

We couldn't make out whether the sentries were pro-Government or pro-Soviet. Our papers from Smolny had no effect, however, so we approached another part of the line with an important air and showed our American passports, saying “Official business!” and shouldered through. At the door of the Palace the same old *shveitzari*, in their brass-buttoned blue uniforms with the red-and-gold collars, politely took our coats and hats, and we went up-stairs. In the dark, gloomy corridor, stripped of its tapestries, a few old attendants were

Ten Days That Shook the World

lounging about, and in front of Kerensky's door a young officer paced up and down, gnawing his moustache. We asked if we could interview the Minister-president. He bowed and clicked his heels.

"No, I am sorry," he replied in French. "Alexander Feodorvitch is extremely occupied just now...." He looked at us for a moment. "In fact, he is not here."

"Where is he?"

"He has gone to the Front.^[2] And do you know, there wasn't enough gasoline for his automobile. We had to send to the English Hospital and borrow some."

"Are the Ministers here?"

"They are meeting in some room - I don't know where."

"Are the Bolsheviki coming?"

"Of course. Certainly, they are coming. I expect a telephone call every minute to say that they are coming. But we are ready. We have *yunkers* in the front of the Palace. Through that door there."

"Can we go in there?"

"No. Certainly not. It is not permitted." Abruptly he shook hands all around and walked away. We turned to the forbidden door, set in a temporary partition dividing the hall and locked on the outside. On the other side were voices, and somebody laughing. Except for that the vast spaces of the old Palace were silent as the grave. An old *shveitzar* ran up. "No, *barin*, you must not go in there."

"Why is the door locked?"

John Reed

"To keep the soldiers in," he answered. After a few minutes he said something about having a glass of tea and went back up the hall. We unlocked the door.

Just inside a couple of soldiers stood on guard, but they said nothing. At the end of the corridor was a large, ornate room with gilded cornices and enormous crystal lustres, and beyond it several smaller ones, wainscot with dark wood. On both sides of the parquetté floor lay rows of dirty mattresses and blankets, upon which occasional soldiers were stretched out; everywhere was a litter of cigarette-butts, bits of bread, cloth, and empty bottles with expensive French labels. More and more soldiers, with the red shoulder-straps of the *yunker*-schools, moved about in a stale atmosphere of tobacco-smoke and unwashed humanity. One had a bottle of white Burgundy, evidently filched from the cellars of the Palace. They looked at us with astonishment as we marched past, through room after room, until at last we came out into a series of great state-salons, fronting their long and dirty windows on the Square. The walls were covered with huge canvases in massive gilt frames - historical battle-scenes. "12 October 1812" and "6 November 1812" and "16/28 August 1813." - One had a gash across the upper right hand corner.

The place was all a huge barrack, and evidently had been for weeks, from the look of the floor and walls. Machine guns were mounted on window-sills, rifles stacked between the mattresses.

As we were looking at the pictures an alcoholic breath assailed me from the region of my left ear, and a voice said in thick but fluent French, "I see, by the way you admire the paintings, that you are foreigners." He was a short, puffy man with a baldish head as he removed his cap.

"Americans? Enchanted. I am Stabs-Capitan Vladimir Artzibashev, absolutely at your service." It did not seem to occur to him that there was anything unusual in four strangers, one a woman, wandering through the defences of an army awaiting attack. He began to complain of the state of Russia.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“Not only these Bolsheviks,” he said, “but the fine traditions of the Russian army are broken down. Look around you. These are all students in the officers’ training schools. But are they gentlemen? Kerensky opened the officers’ schools to the ranks, to any soldier who could pass an examination. Naturally there are many, many who are contaminated by the Revolution.”

Without consequence he changed the subject. “I am very anxious to go away from Russia. I have made up my mind to join the American army. Will you please go to your Consul and make arrangements? I will give you my address.” In spite of our protestations he wrote it on a piece of paper, and seemed to feel better at once. I have it still - *“Oranien-baumskaya Shkola Praporshchikov 2nd, Staraya Peterhof.”*

“We had a review this morning early,” he went on, as he guided us through the rooms and explained everything. “The Women’s Battalion decided to remain loyal to the Government.”

“Are the women soldiers in the Palace?”

“Yes, they are in the back rooms, where they won’t be hurt if any trouble comes.” He sighed. “It is a great responsibility,” said he.

For a while we stood at the window, looking down on the Square before the Palace, where three companies of long-coated *yunkers* were drawn up under arms, being harangued by a tall, energetic-looking officer I recognised as Stankievitch, chief Military Commissar of the Provisional Government. After a few minutes two of the companies shouldered arms with a clash, barked three sharp shouts, and went swinging off across the Square, disappearing through the Red Arch into the quiet city.

“They are going to capture the Telephone Exchange,” said some one. Three cadets stood by us, and we fell into conversation. They said they had entered the schools from the ranks, and gave their names - Robert Olev, Alexei Vasilienko and Erni Sachs, an Estonian. But now

John Reed

they didn't want to be officers any more, because officers were very unpopular. They didn't seem to know what to do, as a matter of fact, and it was plain that they were not happy.

But soon they began to boast. "If the Bolsheviki come we shall show them how to fight. They do not dare to fight, they are cowards. But if we should be overpowered, well, every man keeps one bullet for himself."

At this point there was a burst of rifle-fire not far off. Out on the Square all the people began to run, falling flat on their faces, and the *izvoshtchiki*, standing on the corners, galloped in every direction. Inside all was uproar, soldiers running here and there, grabbing up guns, rifle-belts and shouting, "Here they come! Here they come!" - But in a few minutes it quieted down again. The *izvoshtchiki* came back, the people lying down stood up. Through the Red Arch appeared the *yunkers*, marching a little out of step, one of them supported by two comrades.

It was getting late when we left the Palace. The sentries in the Square had all disappeared. The great semicircle of Government buildings seemed deserted. We went into the Hotel France for dinner, and right in the middle of soup the waiter, very pale in the face, came up and insisted that we move to the main dining-room at the back of the house, because they were going to put out the lights in the café. "There will be much shooting," he said.

When we came out on the Morskaya again it was quite dark, except for one flickering street-light on the corner of the Nevsky. Under this stood a big armored automobile, with racing engine and oil-smoke pouring out of it. A small boy had climbed up the side of the thing and was looking down the barrel of a machine gun. Soldiers and sailors stood around, evidently waiting for something. We walked back up to the Red Arch, where a knot of soldiers was gathered staring at the brightly-lighted Winter Palace and talking in loud tones.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“No, comrades,” one was saying. “How can we shoot at them? The Women’s Battalion is in there - they will say we have fired on Russian women.”

As we reached the Nevsky again another armoured car came around the corner, and a man poked his head out of the turret-top.

“Come on!” he yelled. “Let’s go on through and attack!”

The driver of the other car came over, and shouted so as to be heard above the roaring engine. “The Committee says to wait. They have got artillery behind the wood-piles in there.”

Here the street-cars had stopped running, few people passed, and there were no lights; but a few blocks away we could see the trams, the crowds, the lighted shop-windows and the electric signs of the moving-picture shows - life going on as usual. We had tickets to the Ballet at the Marinsky Theatre - all theatres were open - but it was too exciting out of doors.

In the darkness we stumbled over lumber-piles barricading the Police Bridge, and before the Stroganov Palace made out some soldiers wheeling into position a three-inch field-gun. Men in various uniforms were coming and going in an aimless way, and doing a great deal of talking.

Up the Nevsky the whole city seemed to be out promenading. On every corner immense crowds were massed around a core of hot discussion. Pickets of a dozen soldiers with fixed bayonets lounged at the street-crossings, red-faced old men in rich fur coats shook their fists at them, smartly-dressed women screamed epithets; the soldiers argued feebly, with embarrassed grins.... Armoured cars went up and down the street, named after the first Tsars - Oleg, Rurik, Svietoslav - and daubed with huge red letters, “R. S. D. R. P.” (*Rossiskaya Partia*)^[1]. At the Mikhailovsky a man appeared with an armful of newspapers, and was immediately stormed by frantic people, offering a rouble, five roubles, ten roubles, tearing at each other like animals. It was *Rabotchi i Soldat*,

John Reed

announcing the victory of the Proletarian Revolution, the liberation of the Bolsheviki still in prison, calling upon the Army front and rear for support - a feverish little sheet of four pages, running to enormous type, containing no news.

On the corner of the Sadovaya about two thousand citizens had gathered, staring up at the roof of a tall building, where a tiny red spark glowed and waned.

"See!" said a tall peasant, pointing to it. "It is a provocator. Presently he will fire on the people." Apparently no one thought of going to investigate.

The massive facade of Smolny blazed with lights as we drove up, and from every street converged upon it streams of hurrying shapes dim in the gloom. Automobiles and motorcycles came and went; an enormous elephant-coloured armoured automobile, with two red flags flying from the turret, lumbered out with screaming siren. It was cold, and at the outer gate the Red Guards had built themselves a bon-fire. At the inner gate, too, there was a blaze, by the light of which the sentries slowly spelled out our passes and looked us up and down. The canvas covers had been taken off the four rapid-fire guns on each side of the doorway, and the ammunition-belts hung snakelike from their breeches. A dun herd of armoured cars stood under the trees in the court-yard, engines going. The long, bare, dimly-illuminated halls roared with the thunder of feet, calling, shouting. There was an atmosphere of recklessness. A crowd came pouring down the staircase, workers in black blouses and round black fur hats, many of them with guns slung over their shoulders, soldiers in rough dirt-coloured coats and grey fur *shapki* pinched flat, a leader or so - Lunatcharsky, Kameniev - hurrying along in the centre of a group all talking at once, with harassed anxious faces, and bulging portfolios under their arms. The extraordinary meeting of the Petrograd Soviet was over. I stopped Kameniev - a quick moving little man, with a wide, vivacious face set close to his shoulders. Without preface he read in rapid French a copy of the resolution just passed:

Ten Days That Shook the World

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, saluting the victorious Revolution of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison, particularly emphasises the unity, organisation, discipline, and complete cooperation shown by the masses in this rising; rarely has less blood been spilled, and rarely has an insurrection succeeded so well.

The Soviet expresses its firm conviction that the Workers' and Peasants' Government which, as the government of the Soviets, will be created by the Revolution, and which will assure the industrial proletariat of the support of the entire mass of poor peasants, will march firmly toward Socialism, the only means by which the country can be spared the miseries and unheard-of horrors of war.

The new Workers' and Peasants' Government will propose immediately a just and democratic peace to all the belligerent countries.

It will suppress immediately the great landed property, and transfer the land to the peasants. It will establish workmen's control over production and distribution of manufactured products, and will set up a general control over the banks, which it will transform into a state monopoly.

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies calls upon the workers and the peasants of Russia to support with all their energy and all their devotion the Proletarian Revolution. The Soviet expresses its conviction that the city workers, allies of the poor peasants, will assure complete revolutionary order, indispensable to the victory of Socialism. The Soviet is convinced that the proletariat of the countries of Western Europe will aid us in conducting the cause of Socialism to a real and lasting victory.

"You consider it won then?"

He lifted his shoulders. "There is much to do. Horribly much. It is just beginning.

John Reed

On the landing I met Riazanov, vice-president of the Trade Unions, looking black and biting his grey beard. "It's insane! Insane!" he shouted. "The European working-class won't move! All Russia - " He waved his hand distractedly and ran off. Riazanov and Kameniev had both opposed the insurrection, and felt the lash of Lenin's terrible tongue.

It had been a momentous session. In the name of the Military Revolutionary Committee Trotzky had declared that the Provisional Government no longer existed.

"The characteristic of bourgeois governments," he said, "is to deceive the people. We, the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, are going to try an experiment unique in history; we are going to found a power which will have no other aim but to satisfy the needs of the soldiers, workers, and peasants."

Lenin had appeared, welcomed with a mighty ovation, prophesying world-wide Social Revolution.... And Zinoviev, crying, "This day we have paid our debt to the international proletariat, and struck a terrible blow at the war, a terrible body-blow at all the imperialists and particularly at Wilhelm the Executioner.

Then Trotzky, that telegrams had been sent to the front announcing the victorious insurrection, but no reply had come. Troops were said to be marching against Petrograd - a delegation must be sent to tell them the truth.

Cries, "You are anticipating the will of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets!"

Trotzky, coldly, "The will of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets has been anticipated by the rising of the Petrograd workers and soldiers!"

So we came into the great meeting-hall, pushing through the clamorous mob at the door. In the rows of seats, under the white

Ten Days That Shook the World

chandeliers, packed immovably in the aisles and on the sides, perched on every window-sill, and even the edge of the platform, the representatives of the workers and soldiers of all Russia waited in anxious silence or wild exultation the ringing of the chairman's bell. There was no heat in the hall but the stifling heat of unwashed human bodies. A foul blue cloud of cigarette smoke rose from the mass and hung in the thick air. Occasionally someone in authority mounted the tribune and asked the comrades not to smoke; then everybody, smokers and all, took up the cry "Don't smoke, comrades!" and went on smoking. Petrovsky, Anarchist delegate from the Obukhov factory, made a seat for me beside him. Unshaven and filthy, he was reeling from three nights' sleepless work on the Military Revolutionary Committee.

On the platform sat the leaders of the old *Tsay-ee-kah* - for the last time dominating the turbulent Soviets, which they had ruled from the first days, and which were now risen against them. It was the end of the first period of the Russian revolution, which these men had attempted to guide in careful ways.... The three greatest of them were not there: Kerensky, flying to the front through country towns all doubtfully heaving up; Tcheidze, the old eagle, who had contemptuously retired to his own Georgian mountains, there to sicken with consumption; and the high-souled Tseretelli, also mortally stricken, who, nevertheless, would return and pour out his beautiful eloquence for a lost cause. Gotz sat there, Dan, Lieber, Bogdanov, Broido, Fillipovsky, - white-faced, hollow-eyed and indignant. Below them the second *siezd* of the All-Russian Soviets boiled and swirled, and over their heads the Military Revolutionary Committee functioned white-hot, holding in its hands the threads of insurrection and striking with a long arm.... It was 10.40 P.M.

Dan, a mild-faced, baldish figure in a shapeless military surgeon's uniform, was ringing the bell. Silence fell sharply, intense, broken by the scuffling and disputing of the people at the door....

"We have the power in our hands," he began sadly, stopped for a moment, and then went on in a low voice. "Comrades! The Congress of Soviets in meeting in such unusual circumstances and in such an

John Reed

extraordinary moment that you will understand why the *Tsay-ee-kah* considers it unnecessary to address you with a political speech. This will become much clearer to you if you will recollect that I am a member of the *Tsay-ee-kah*, and that at this very moment our party comrades are in the Winter Palace under bombardment, sacrificing themselves to execute the duty put on them by the *Tsay-ee-kah*.” (Confused uproar.) “I declare the first session of the Second Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies open!”

The election of the presidium took place amid stir and moving about. Avanessov announced that by agreement of the Bolsheviks, Left Socialist Revolutionaries and Menshevik Internationalists, it was decided to base the presidium upon proportionality. Several Mensheviks leaped to their feet protesting. A bearded soldier shouted at them, “Remember what you did to us Bolsheviks when we were the minority!” Result - 14 Bolsheviks, 7 Socialist Revolutionaries, 3 Mensheviks and 1 Internationalist (Gorky’s group). Hendelmann, for the right and centre Socialist Revolutionaries, said that they refused to take part in the presidium; the same from Kintchuk, for the Mensheviks; and from the Menshevik Internationalists, that until the verification of certain circumstances, they too could not enter the presidium. Scattering applause and hoots. One voice, “Renegades, you call yourselves Socialists!” A representative of the Ukrainian delegates demanded, and received, a place. Then the old *Tsay-ee-kah* stepped down, and in their places appeared Trotsky, Kamenev, Lunatcharsky, Madame Kollontai, Nogin.... The hall rose, thundering. How far they had soared, these Bolsheviks, from a despised and hunted sect less than four months ago, to this supreme place, the helm of great Russia in full tide of insurrection!



Kamenev and Lenin at Gorki, 1922

The order of the day, said Kamenev, was first, Organisation of Power; second, War and Peace; and third, the Constituent Assembly. Lozovsky,

Ten Days That Shook the World

rising, announced that upon agreement of the bureau of all factions, it was proposed to hear and discuss the report of the Petrograd Soviet, then to give the floor to members of the *Tsay-ee-kah* and the different parties, and finally to pass to the order of the day.

But suddenly a new sound made itself heard, deeper than the tumult of the crowd, persistent, disquieting, - the dull shock of guns. People looked anxiously toward the clouded windows, and a sort of fever came over them. Martov, demanding the floor, croaked hoarsely, "The civil war is beginning, comrades! The first question must be a peaceful settlement of the crisis. On principle and from a political standpoint we must urgently discuss a means of averting civil war. Our brothers are being shot down in the streets! At this moment, when before the opening of the Congress of Soviets the question of Power is being settled by means of a military plot organised by one of the revolutionary parties - " for a moment he could not make himself heard above the noise, "All of the revolutionary parties must face the fact! The first *vopros* (question) before the Congress is the question of Power, and this question is already being settled by force of arms in the streets! - We must create a power which will be recognised by the whole democracy. If the Congress wishes to be the voice of the revolutionary democracy it must not sit with folded hands before the developing civil war, the result of which may be a dangerous outburst of counter-revolution. The possibility of a peaceful outcome lies in the formation of a united democratic authority.... We must elect a delegation to negotiate with the other Socialist parties and organisation.

Always the methodical muffled boom of cannon through the windows, and the delegates, screaming at each other. So, with the crash of artillery, in the dark, with hatred, and fear, and reckless daring, new Russia was being born.

The Left Socialist Revolutionaries and the United Social Democrats supported Martov's proposition. It was accepted. A soldier announced that the All-Russian Peasants' Soviets had refused to send delegates to the Congress; he proposed that a committee be sent with a

John Reed

formal invitation. "Some delegates are present," he said. "I move that they be given votes." Accepted.

Kharash, wearing the epaulets of a captain, passionately demanded the floor. "The political hypocrites who control this Congress," he shouted, "told us we were to settle the question of Power - and it is being settled behind our backs, before the Congress opens! Blows are being struck against the Winter Palace, and it is by such blows that the nails are being driven into the coffin of the political party which has risked such an adventure!" Uproar. Followed him Gharra: "While we are here discussing propositions of peace, there is a battle on in the streets. The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviki refuse to be involved in what is happening, and call upon all public forces to resist the attempt to capture the power." Kutchin, delegate of the 12th Army and representative of the Troudoviki: "I was sent here only for information, and I am returning at once to the Front, where all the Army Committees consider that the taking of power by the Soviets, only three weeks before the Constituent Assembly, is a stab in the back of the Army and a crime against the people - !" Shouts of "Lie! You lie!" When he could be heard again, "Let's make an end of this adventure in Petrograd! I call upon all delegates to leave this hall in order to save the country and the Revolution!" As he went down the aisle in the midst of a deafening noise, people surged in upon him, threatening. Then Khintchuk, an officer with a long brown goatee, speaking suavely and persuasively: "I speak for the delegates from the Front. The Army is imperfectly represented in this Congress, and furthermore, the Army does not consider the Congress of Soviets necessary at this time, only three weeks before the opening of the Constituent - " shouts and stamping, always growing more violent. "The Army does not consider that the Congress of Soviets has the necessary authority - " Soldiers began to stand up all over the hall.

"Who are you speaking for? What do you represent?" they cried.

"The Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of the Fifth Army, the Second F - regiment, the First N - Regiment, the Third S - Rifles."

Ten Days That Shook the World

“When were you elected? You represent the officers, not the soldiers! What do the soldiers say about it?” Jeers and hoots.

“We, the Front group, disclaim all responsibility for what has happened and is happening, and we consider it necessary to mobilise all self-conscious revolutionary forces for the salvation of the Revolution! The Front group will leave the Congress. The place to fight is out on the streets!”

Immense bawling outcry. “You speak for the Staff - not for the Army!”

“I appeal to all reasonable soldiers to leave this Congress!”

“Kornilovitz! Counter-revolutionist! Provocator!” were hurled at him.

On behalf of the Mensheviki, Khintchuk then announced that the only possibility of a peaceful solution was to begin negotiations with the Provisional Government for the formation of a new Cabinet, which would find support in all strata of society. He could not proceed for several minutes. Raising his voice to a shout he read the Menshevik declaration:

“Because the Bolsheviks have made a military conspiracy with the aid of the Petrograd Soviet, without consulting the other factions and parties, we find it impossible to remain in the Congress, and therefore withdraw, inviting the other groups to follow us and to meet for discussion of the situation!”

“Deserter!” At intervals in the almost continuous disturbance Hendelman, for the Socialist Revolutionaries, could be heard protesting against the bombardment of the Winter Palace. “We are opposed to this kind of anarchy.”

John Reed

Scarcely had he stepped down than a young, lean-faced soldier, with flashing eyes, leaped to the platform, and dramatically lifted his hand:

“Comrades!” he cried and there was a hush. “My *familia* (name) is Peterson - I speak for the Second Lettish Rifles. You have heard the statements of two representatives of the Army committees; these statements would have some value *if their authors had been representatives of the Army* - ” Wild applause. “*But they do not represent the soldiers!*” Shaking his fist. “The Twelfth Army has been insisting for a long time upon the re-election of the Great Soviet and the Army Committee, but just as your own *Tsay-ee-kah*, our Committee refused to call a meeting of the representatives of the masses until the end of September, so that the reactionaries could elect their own false delegates to this Congress. I tell you now, the Lettish soldiers have many times said, ‘No more resolutions! No more talk! We want deeds - the Power must be in our hands!’ Let these impostor delegates leave the Congress! The Army is not with them!”

The hall rocked with cheering. In the first moments of the session, stunned by the rapidity of events, startled by the sound of cannon, the delegates had hesitated. For an hour hammer-blow after hammer-blow had fallen from that tribune, welding them together but beating them down. Did they stand then alone? Was Russia rising against them? Was it true that the Army was marching on Petrograd? Then this clear-eyed young soldier had spoken, and in a flash they knew it for the truth.... *This* was the voice of the soldiers - the stirring millions of uniformed workers and peasants were men like them, and their thoughts and feelings were the same.

More soldiers - Gzhelshakh; for the Front delegates, announcing that they had only decided to leave the Congress by a small majority, and that *the Bolshevik members had not even taken part in the vote*, as they stood for division according to political parties, and not groups. “Hundreds of delegates from the Front,” he said, “are being elected without the participation of the soldiers because the Army Committees are no longer the real representatives of the rank and file.” Lukianov, crying that officers like Kharash and Khintchuk could not represent the

Ten Days That Shook the World

Army in this congress, - but only the high command. "The real inhabitants of the trenches want with all their hearts the transfer of Power into the hands of the Soviets, and they expect very much from it!" - The tide was turning.

Then came Abramovitch, for the *Bund*, the organ of the Jewish Social Democrats - his eyes snapping behind thick glasses, trembling with rage.

"What is taking place now in Petrograd is a monstrous calamity! The *Bund* group joins with the declaration of the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries and will leave the Congress!" He raised his voice and hand. "Our duty to the Russian proletariat doesn't permit us to remain here and be responsible for these crimes. Because the firing on the Winter Palace doesn't cease, the Municipal Duma together with the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, and the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviet, has decided to perish with the Provisional Government, and we are going with them! Unarmed we will expose our breasts to the machine guns of the Terrorists.... We invite all delegates to this Congress - " The rest was lost in a storm of hoots, menaces and curses which rose to a hellish pitch as fifty delegates got up and pushed their way out.

Kameniev jangled the bell, shouting, "Keep your seats and we'll go on with our business!" And Trotzky, standing up with a pale, cruel face, letting out his rich voice in cool contempt, "All these so-called Socialist compromisers, these frightened Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, *Bund* - let them go! They are just so much refuse which will be swept into the garbage-heap of history!"

Riazanov, for the Bolsheviks, stated that at the request of the City Duma the Military Revolutionary Committee had sent a delegation to offer negotiations to the Winter Palace. "In this way we have done everything possible to avoid blood-shed."

We hurried from the place, stopping for a moment at the room where the Military Revolutionary Committee worked at furious speed,

John Reed

engulfing and spitting out panting couriers, despatching Commissars armed with power of life and death to all the corners of the city, amid the buzz of the telephonographs. The door opened, a blast of stale air and cigarette smoke rushed out, we caught a glimpse of dishevelled men bending over a map under the glare of a shaded electric-light. Comrade Josephov-Dukhvinski, a smiling youth with a mop of pale yellow hair, made out passes for us.

When we came into the chill night, all the front of Smolny was one huge park of arriving and departing automobiles, above the sound of which could be heard the far-off slow beat of the cannon. A great motor-truck stood there, shaking to the roar of its engine. Men were tossing bundles into it, and others receiving them, with guns beside them.

“Where are you going?” I shouted.

“Downtown - all over - everywhere!” answered a little workman, grinning, with a large exultant gesture.

We showed our passes. “Come along!” they invited. “But there’ll probably be shooting - ” We climbed in; the clutch slid home with a raking jar, the great car jerked forward, we all toppled backward on top of those who were climbing in; past the huge fire by the gate, and then the fire by the outer gate, glowing red on the faces of the workmen with rifles who squatted around it, and went bumping at top speed down the Suvorovsky Prospect, swaying from side to side.... One man tore the wrapping from a bundle and began to hurl handfuls of papers into the air. We imitated him, plunging down through the dark street with a tail of white papers floating and eddying out behind. The late passerby stooped to pick them up; the patrols around bonfires on the corners ran out with uplifted arms to catch them. Sometimes armed men loomed up ahead, crying “*Shto!*” and raising their guns, but our chauffeur only yelled something unintelligible and we hurtled on.

I picked up a copy of the paper, and under a fleeting street-light read:

Ten Days That Shook the World
TO THE CITIZENS OF RUSSIA!

The Provisional Government is deposed. The State Power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the Military Revolutionary Committee, which stands at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison.

The cause for which the people were fighting: immediate proposal of a democratic peace, abolition of landlord property-rights over the land, labor control over production, creation of a Soviet Government - that cause is securely achieved.

LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION OF WORKMEN, SOLDIERS AND PEASANTS!

Military Revolutionary Committee

Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Отъ Военно - Революціоннаго Комитета при Петроградскомъ Совѣтѣ
Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ.

Къ Гражданамъ Россіи.

Временное Правительство низложено. Государственная власть перешла въ руки органа Петроградскаго Совѣта Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ Военно-Революціоннаго Комитета, стоящаго во главѣ Петроградскаго пролетаріата и гарнизона.

Дѣло, за которое боролся народъ: немедленное предложение демократическаго мира, отмѣна помѣщичьей собственности на землю, рабочій контроль надъ производствомъ, созданіе Совѣтскаго Правительства — это дѣло обезпечено.

**ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТЪ РЕВОЛЮЦІЯ РАБОЧИХЪ, СОЛДАТЪ
И КРЕСТЬЯНЪ!**

*Военно-Революціонный Комитетъ
при Петроградскомъ Совѣтѣ
Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ.*

25 октября 1917 г. 10 ч. утра.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Proclamation of the Fall of the Provisional Government issued by the Military Revolutionary Committee on the night of November 7th (our calendar), which we helped to distribute from a motor-truck just after the surrender of the Winter Palace.

A slant-eyed, Mongolian-faced man who sat beside me, dressed in a goat-skin Caucasian cape, snapped, "Look out! Here the provocateurs always shoot from the windows!" We turned into Znamensky Square, dark and almost deserted, careened around Trubetskoy's brutal statue and swung down the wide Nevsky, three men standing up with rifles ready, peering at the windows. Behind us the street was alive with people running and stooping. We could no longer hear the cannon, and the nearer we drew to the Winter Palace end of the city the quieter and more deserted were the streets. The City Duma was all brightly lighted. Beyond that we made out a dark mass of people, and a line of sailors, who yelled furiously at us to stop. The machine slowed down, and we climbed out.

It was an astonishing scene. Just at the corner of the Ekaterina Canal, under an arc-light, a cordon of armed sailors was drawn across the Nevsky, blocking the way to a crowd of people in column of fours. There were about three or four hundred of them, men in frock coats, well-dressed women, officers - all sorts and conditions of people. Among them we recognised many of the delegates from the Congress, leaders of the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries; Avksentiev, the lean, red-bearded president of the Peasants' Soviets, Sarokin, Kerensky's spokesman, Khintchuk, Abramovitch; and at the head white-bearded old Schreider, Mayor of Petrograd, and Prokopovitch, Minister of Supplies in the Provisional Government, arrested that morning and released. I caught sight of Malkin, reporter for the *Russian Daily News*. "Going to die in the Winter Palace," he shouted cheerfully. The procession stood still, but from the front of it came loud argument. Schreider and Prokopovitch were bellowing at the big sailor who seemed in command.

John Reed

“We demand to pass!” they cried. “See, these comrades come from the Congress of Soviets! Look at their tickets! We are going to the Winter Palace!”

The sailor was plainly puzzled. He scratched his head with an enormous hand, frowning. “I have orders from the Committee not to let anybody go to the Winter Palace,” he grumbled. “But I will send a comrade to telephone to Smolny.”

“We Insist upon passing! We are unarmed! We will march on whether you permit us or not!” cried old Schreider, very much excited.

“I have orders - ” repeated the sailor sullenly.

“Shoot us if you want to! We will pass! Forward!” came from all sides. “We are ready to die, if you have the heart to fire on Russians and comrades! We bare our breasts to your guns!”

“No,” said the sailor, looking stubborn, “I can’t allow you to pass.”

“What will you do if we go forward? Will you shoot?”

“No, I’m not going to shoot people who haven’t any guns. We won’t shoot unarmed Russian people....”

“We will go forward! What can you do?”

“We will do something,” replied the sailor, evidently at a loss. “We can’t let you pass. We will do something.”

“What will you do? What will you do?”

Another sailor came up, very much irritated. “We will spank you!” he cried, energetically. “And if necessary we will shoot you too. Go home now, and leave us in peace!”

Ten Days That Shook the World

At this there was a great clamour of anger and resentment, Prokopovitch had mounted some sort of box, and, waving his umbrella, he made a speech:

“Comrades and citizens!” he said. “Force is being used against us! We cannot have our innocent blood upon the hands of these ignorant men! It is beneath our dignity to be shot down here in the street by switchmen - ” (What he meant by “switchmen” I never discovered.) “Let us return to the Duma and discuss the best means of saving the country and the Revolution!”

Whereupon, in dignified silence, the procession marched around and back up the Nevsky, always in column of fours. And taking advantage of the diversion we slipped past the guards and set off in the direction of the Winter Palace.

Here it was absolutely dark, and nothing moved but pickets of soldiers and Red Guards grimly intent. In front of the Kazan Cathedral a three-inch field-gun lay in the middle of the street, slewed sideways from the recoil of its last shot over the roofs. Soldiers were standing in every doorway talking in low tones and peering down toward the Police Bridge. I heard one voice saying: “It is possible that we have done wrong...” At the corners patrols stopped all passersby - and the composition of these patrols was interesting, for in command of the regular troops was invariably a Red Guard. The shooting had ceased.

Just as we came to the Morskaya somebody was shouting: “The *yunkers* have sent word they want us to go and get them out!” Voices began to give commands, and in the thick gloom we made out a dark mass moving forward, silent but for the shuffle of feet and the clinking of arms. We fell in with the first ranks.

Like a black river, filling all the street, without song or cheer we poured through the Red Arch, where the man just ahead of me said in a low voice: “Look out, comrades! Don’t trust them. They will fire, surely!” In the open we began to run, stooping low and bunching

John Reed

together, and jammed up suddenly behind the pedestal of the Alexander Column.

“How many of you did they kill?” I asked.

“I don’t know. About ten....”

After a few minutes huddling there, some hundreds of men, the army seemed reassured and without any orders suddenly began again to flow forward. By this time, in the light that streamed out of all the Winter Palace windows, I could see that the first two or three hundred men were Red Guards, with only a few scattered soldiers. Over the barricade of firewood we clambered, and leaping down inside gave a triumphant shout as we stumbled on a heap of rifles thrown down by the *yunkers* who had stood there. On both sides of the main gateway the doors stood wide open, light streamed out, and from the huge pile came not the slightest sound.

Carried along by the eager wave of men we were swept into the right hand entrance, opening into a great bare vaulted room, the cellar of the East wing, from which issued a maze of corridors and staircases. A number of huge packing cases stood about, and upon these the Red Guards and soldiers fell furiously, battering them open with the butts of their rifles, and pulling out carpets, curtains, linen, porcelain plates, glassware. One man went strutting around with a bronze clock perched on his shoulder; another found a plume of ostrich feathers, which he stuck in his hat. The looting was just beginning when somebody cried, “Comrades! Don’t touch anything! Don’t take anything! This is the property of the People!” Immediately twenty voices were crying, “Stop! Put everything back! Don’t take anything! Property of the People!” Many hands dragged the spoilers down. Damask and tapestry were snatched from the arms of those who had them; two men took away the bronze clock. Roughly and hastily the things were crammed back in their cases, and self-appointed sentinels stood guard. It was all utterly spontaneous. Through corridors and up stair-cases the cry could be heard growing fainter and fainter in the distance, “Revolutionary discipline! Property of the People.”

Ten Days That Shook the World

We crossed back over to the left entrance, in the West wing. There order was also being established. "Clear the Palace!" bawled a Red Guard, sticking his head through an inner door. "Come, comrades, let's show that we're not thieves and bandits. Everybody out of the Palace except the Commissars, until we get sentries posted."

Two Red Guards, a soldier and an officer, stood with revolvers in their hands. Another soldier sat at a table behind them, with pen and paper. Shouts of "All out! All out!" were heard far and near within, and the Army began to pour through the door, jostling, expostulating, arguing. As each man appeared he was seized by the self-appointed committee, who went through his pockets and looked under his coat. Everything that was plainly not his property was taken away, the man at the table noted it on his paper, and it was carried into a little room. The most amazing assortment of objects were thus confiscated; statuettes, bottles of ink, bed-spreads worked with the Imperial monogram, candles, a small oil-painting, desk blotters, gold-handled swords, cakes of soap, clothes of every description, blankets. One Red Guard carried three rifles, two of which he had taken away from *yunkers*; another had four portfolios bulging with written documents. The culprits either sullenly surrendered or pleaded like children. All talking at once the committee explained that stealing was not worthy of the people's champions; often those who had been caught turned around and began to help go through the rest of the comrades.^[3]

Yunkers came out, in bunches of three or four. The committee seized upon them with an excess of zeal, accompanying the search with remarks like, "Ah, Provocators! Kornilovists! Counter-revolutionists! Murderers of the People!" But there was no violence done, although the *yunkers* were terrified. They too had their pockets full of small plunder. It was carefully noted down by the scribe, and piled in the little room.... The *yunkers* were disarmed. "Now, will you take up arms against the People any more?" demanded clamouring voices.

"No," answered the *yunkers*, one by one. Whereupon they were allowed to go free.

John Reed

We asked if we might go inside. The committee was doubtful, but the big Red Guard answered firmly that it was forbidden. "Who are you anyway?" he asked. "How do I know that you are not all Kerenskys?" (There were five of us, two women.)

"*Pazhal'st', touarishtchi!* Way, Comrades!" A soldier and a Red Guard appeared in the door, waving the crowd aside, and other guards with fixed bayonets. After them followed single file half a dozen men in civilian dress - the members of the Provisional Government. First came Kishkin, his face drawn and pale, then Rutenberg, looking sullenly at the floor; Terestchenko was next, glancing sharply around; he stared at us with cold fixity.... They passed in silence; the victorious insurrectionists crowded to see, but there were only a few angry mutterings. It was only later that we learned how the people in the street wanted to lynch them, and shots were fired - but the sailors brought them safely to Peter-Paul.

In the meanwhile unrebuked we walked into the Palace. There was still a great deal of coming and going, of exploring new-found apartments in the vast edifice, of searching for hidden garrisons of *yunkers* which did not exist. We went upstairs and wandered through room after room. This part of the Palace had been entered also by other detachments from the side of the Neva. The paintings, statues, tapestries and rugs of the great state apartments were unharmed; in the offices, however, every desk and cabinet had been ransacked, the papers scattered over the floor, and in the living rooms beds had been stripped of their coverings and wardrobes wrenched open. The most highly prized loot was clothing, which the working people needed. In a room where furniture was stored we came upon two soldiers ripping the elaborate Spanish leather upholstery from chairs. They explained it was to make boots with.

The old Palace servants in their blue and red and gold uniforms stood nervously about, from force of habit repeating, "You can't go in there, *barin!* It is forbidden - " We penetrated at length to the gold and malachite chamber with crimson brocade hangings where the Ministers

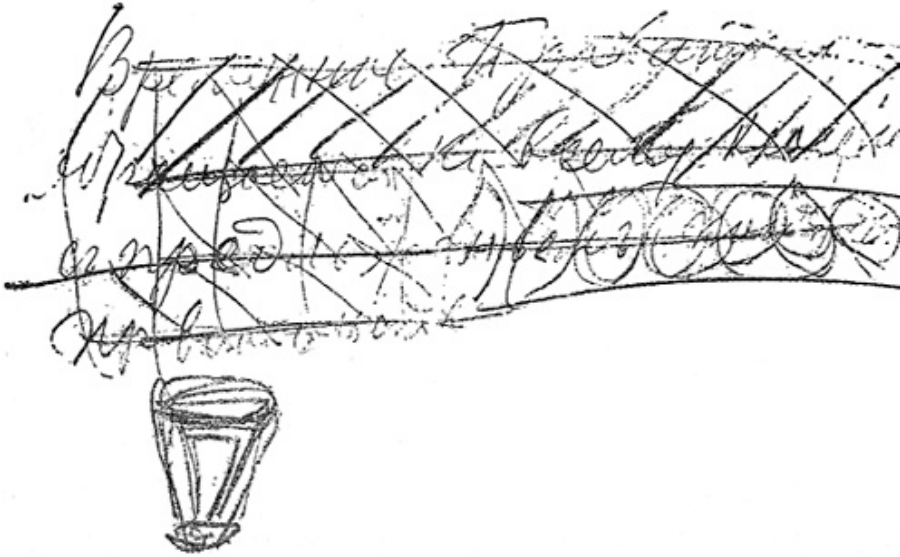
Ten Days That Shook the World

had been in session all that day and night, and where the *shveitzari* had betrayed them to the Red Guards. The long table covered with green baize was just as they had left it, under arrest. Before each empty seat was pen and ink and paper; the papers were scribbled over with beginnings of plans of action, rough drafts of proclamations and manifestos. Most of these were scratched out, as their futility became evident, and the rest of the sheet covered with absent-minded geometrical designs, as the writers sat despondently listening while Minister after Minister proposed chimerical schemes. I took one of these scribbled pages, in the hand writing of Konovalov, which read, "The Provisional Government appeals to all classes to support the Provisional Government - "

All this time, it must be remembered, although the Winter Palace was surrounded, the Government was in constant communication with the Front and with provincial Russia. The Bolsheviki had captured the Ministry of War early in the morning, but they did not know of the military telegraph office in the attic, nor of the private telephone line connecting it with the Winter Palace. In that attic a young officer sat all day, pouring out over the country a flood of appeals and proclamations; and when he heard that the Palace had fallen, put on his hat and walked calmly out of the building.

Interested as we were, for a considerable time we didn't notice a change in the attitude of the soldiers and Red Guards around us. As we strolled from room to room a small group followed us, until by the time we reached the great picture-gallery where we had spent the afternoon with the *yunkers*, about a hundred men surged in after us. One giant of a soldier stood in our path, his face dark with sullen suspicion.

"Who are you?" he growled. "What are you doing here?" The others massed slowly around, staring and beginning to mutter. "*Provocatori!*" I heard somebody say. "Looters!"



Facsimile of the beginning of a proclamation, written in pencil by A.I. Konovalov, Minister of Commerce and Industry in the Provisional Government, and then scratched out as the hopeless of the situation became more and more evident. The geometrical figure beneath was probably idly drawn while the Ministers were waiting for the end.

I produced our passes from the Military Revolutionary Committee. The soldier took them gingerly, turned them upside down and looked at them without comprehension. Evidently he could not read. He handed them back and spat on the floor. "*Bumagi!* Papers!" said he with contempt. The mass slowly began to close in, like wild cattle around a cowpuncher on foot. Over their heads I caught sight of an officer, looking helpless, and shouted to him. He made for us, shouldering his way through.

"I'm the Commissar," he said to me. "Who are you? What is it?" The others held back, waiting. I produced the papers.

"You are foreigners?" he rapidly asked in French. "It is very dangerous." Then he turned to the mob, holding up our documents.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“Comrades!” he cried. “These people are foreign comrades - from America. They have come here to be able to tell their countrymen about the bravery and the revolutionary discipline of the proletarian army!”

“How do you know that?” replied the big soldier. “I tell you they are provocateurs! They say they came here to observe the revolutionary discipline of the proletarian army, but they have been wandering freely through the Palace, and how do we know they haven’t got their pockets full of loot?”

“*Pravilno!*” snarled the others, pressing forward.

“Comrades! Comrades!” appealed the officer, sweat standing out on his forehead. “I am Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Do you trust me? Well, I tell you that these passes are signed with the same names that are signed to my pass!”

He led us down through the Palace and out through a door opening onto the Neva quay, before which stood the usual committee going through pockets - “You have narrowly escaped,” he kept muttering, wiping his face.

“What happened to the Women’s Battalion?” we asked.

“Oh - the women!” He laughed. “They were all huddled up in a back room. We had a terrible time deciding what to do with them - many were in hysterics, and so on. So finally we marched them up to the Finland Station and put them on a train for Levashovo, where they have a camp.”^[4]

We came out into the cold, nervous night, murmurous with obscure armies on the move, electric with patrols. From across the river, where loomed the darker mass of Peter-Paul, came a hoarse shout. Underfoot the sidewalk was littered with broken stucco, from the cornice of the Palace where two shells from the battleship *Avrora* had struck; that was the only damage done by the bombardment.

John Reed

It was now after three in the morning. On the Nevsky all the street-lights were again shining, the cannon gone, and the only signs of war were Red Guards and soldiers squatting around fires. The city was quite - probably never so quiet in its history; on that night not a single hold-up occurred, not a single robbery.

But the City Duma Building was all illuminated. We mounted to the galleried Alexander Hall, hung with its great, gold-framed, red-shrouded Imperial portraits. About a hundred people were grouped around the platform, where Skobeliev was speaking. He urged that the Committee of Public Safety be expanded, so as to unite all the anti-Bolshevik elements in one huge organisation, to be called the Committee for Salvation of Country and Revolution. And as we looked on, the Committee for Salvation was formed - that Committee which was to develop into the most powerful enemy of the Bolsheviks, appearing, in the next week, sometimes under its own partisan name, and sometimes as the strictly non-partisan Committee of Public Safety.

Dan, Gotz, Avkesntiev were there, some of the insurgent Soviet delegates, members of the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets, old Prokopovitch, and even members of the Council of the Republic - among whom Vinaver and other Cadets. Lieber cried that the convention of Soviets was not a legal convention, that the old *Tsay-ee-kah* was still in office.... An appeal to the country was drafted.

We hailed a cab. "Where to?" But when we said "Smolny," the *izvoshtchik* shook his head. "*Niet!*" said he, "there are devil." It was only after weary wandering that we found a driver willing to take us - and he wanted thirty rubles, and stopped two blocks away.

The windows of Smolny were still ablaze, motors came and went, and around the still-leaping fires the sentries huddled close, eagerly asking everybody the latest news. The corridors were full of hurrying men, hollow-eyed and dirty. In some of the committee-rooms people lay sleeping on the floor, their guns beside them. In spite of the seceding delegates, the hall of meetings was crowded with people, roaring like the sea. As we came in, Kameniev was reading the list of arrested Ministers. The name of Terestchenko was greeted with

Ten Days That Shook the World

thunderous applause, shouts of satisfaction, laughter; Rutenberg came in for less; and at the mention of Paltchinsky, a storm of hoots, angry cries, cheers burst forth... It was announced that Tchudnovsky had been appointed Commissar of the Winter Palace.

Now occurred a dramatic interruption. A big peasant, his bearded face convulsed with rage, mounted the platform and pounded with his fist on the presidium table.

“We, Socialist Revolutionaries, insist upon the immediate release of the Socialist Ministers arrested in the Winter Palace! Comrades! Do you know that four comrades who risked their lives and their freedom fighting against tyranny of the Tsar, have been flung into Peter-Paul prison - the historical tomb of Liberty?” In the uproar he pounded and yelled. Another delegate climbed up beside him, and pointed at the presidium.

“Are the representatives of the revolutionary masses going to sit quietly here while the *Okhrana* of the Bolsheviks tortures their leaders?” Trotzky was gesturing for silence. “These ‘comrades’ who are now caught plotting the crushing of the Soviets with the adventurer Kerensky - is there any reason to handle them with gloves? After July 16th and 18th they didn’t use much ceremony with us!” With a triumphant ring in his voice he cried, “Now that the *oborontsi* and the faint-hearted have gone, and the whole task of defending and saving the Revolution rests on our shoulders, it is particularly necessary to work - work - work! We have decided to die rather than give up!”

Followed him a Commissar from Tsarskoye Selo, panting and covered with the mud of his ride. “The garrison of Tsarskoye Selo is on guard at the gates of Petrograd, ready to defend the Soviets and the Military Revolutionary Committee!” Wild cheers. “The Cycle Corps sent from the front has arrived at Tsarskoye, and the soldiers are now with us; they recognise the power of the Soviets, the necessity of immediate transfer of land to the peasants and industrial control to the workers. The Fifth Battalion of Cyclists, stationed at Tsarskoye, is ours.

John Reed

Then the delegate of the Third Cycle Battalion. In the midst of delirious enthusiasm he told how the cycle corps had been ordered *three days before* from the South-west front to the “defence of Petrograd.” They suspected, however, the meaning of the order; and at the station of Peredolsk were met by representatives of the Fifth Battalion from Tsarskoye. A joint meeting was held, and it was discovered that “among the cyclists not a single man was found willing to shed the blood of his brothers, or to support a Government of bourgeois and land-owners!”

Kapelinski, for the Mensheviki Internationalists, proposed to elect a special committee to find a peaceful solution to the civil war. “There isn’t any peaceful solution!” bellowed the crowd. “Victory is the only solution!” The vote was overwhelmingly against, and the Mensheviki Internationalists left the Congress in a Whirlwind of Jocular insults. There was no longer any panic fear. Kameniev from the platform shouted after them, “The Mensheviki Internationalists claimed ‘emergency’ for the question of a ‘peaceful solution,’ but they always voted for suspension of the order of the day in favour of declarations of factions which wanted to leave the Congress. It is evident,” finished Kameniev, “that the withdrawal of all these renegades was decided upon beforehand!”

The assembly decided to ignore the withdrawal of the factions, and proceed to the appeal to the workers, soldiers and peasants of all Russia:

To Workers, Soldiers And Peasants

The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies has opened. It represents the great majority of the Soviets. There are also a number of Peasant deputies. Based upon the will of the great majority of the workers’, soldiers and peasants, based upon the triumphant uprising of the Petrograd workmen and soldiers, the Congress assumes the Power.

The Provisional Government is deposed. Most of the members of the Provisional Government are already arrested.

Ten Days That Shook the World

The Soviet authority will at once propose an immediate democratic peace to all nations, and an immediate truce on all fronts. It will assure the free transfer of landlord, crown and monastery lands to the Land Committees, defend the soldiers rights, enforcing a complete democratisation of the Army, establish workers' control over production, ensure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the proper date, take means to supply bread to the cities and articles of first necessity to the villages, and secure to all nationalities living in Russia a real right to independent existence.

The Congress resolves: that all local power shall be transferred to the Soviets of Workers,' Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must enforce revolutionary order.

The Congress calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to be watchful and steadfast. The Congress of Soviets is sure that the revolutionary Army will know how to defend the Revolution against all attacks of Imperialism, until the new Government shall have brought about the conclusion of the democratic peace which it will directly propose to all nations. The new Government will take all necessary steps to secure everything needful to the revolutionary Army, by means of a determined policy of requisition and taxation of the propertied classes, and also to improve the situation of soldiers' families. The Kornilovitz - Kerensky, Kaledin and others - are endeavouring to lead troops against Petrograd. Several regiments, deceived by Kerensky, have sided with the insurgent People.

Soldiers! Make active resistance to the Kornilovitz - Kerensky! Be on guard!

Railway men! Stop all troop-trains being sent by Kerensky against Petrograd!

Soldiers, Workers, Clerical employees! The destiny of the Revolution and democratic peace is in your hands!

John Reed

Long live the Revolution!

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets of
Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.
Delegates from the Peasants' Soviets.

It was exactly 5:17 A.M. when Krylenko, staggering with fatigue, climbed to the tribune with a telegram in his hand.

“Comrades! From the Northern Front. The Twelfth Army sends greetings to the Congress of Soviets, announcing the formation of a Military Revolutionary Committee which has taken over the command of the Northern Front!” Pandemonium, men weeping, embracing each other. “General Tchermissov has recognised the Committee - Commissar of the Provisional Government Voitinsky has resigned!”

So. Lenin and the Petrograd workers had decided on insurrection, the Petrograd Soviet had overthrown the Provisional Government, and thrust the *coup d'état* upon the Congress of Soviets. Now there was all great Russia to win - and then the world! Would Russia follow and rise? And the world - what of it? Would the peoples answer and rise, a red world-tide?

Although it was six in the morning, night was yet heavy and chill. There was only a faint unearthly pallor stealing over the silent streets, dimming the watch-fires, the shadow of a terrible dawn grey-rising over Russia....

Footnotes

[1] *Events Of November 7th*: From 4 A.M. until dawn Kerensky remained at the Petrograd Staff Headquarters, sending orders to the Cossacks and to the *yunkers* in the Officers' Schools in and around Petrograd - all of whom answered that they were unable to move.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Colonel Polkovnikov, Commandant of the City, hurried between the Staff and the Winter Palace, evidently without any plan. Kerensky gave an order to open the bridges; three hours passed without any action, and then an officer and five men went out on their own initiative, and putting to flight a picket of Red Guards, opened the Nicolai Bridge. Immediately after they left, however, some sailors closed it again.

Kerensky ordered the print-shop of *Rabotchi Put* to be occupied. The officer detailed to the work was promised a squad of soldiers; two hours later he was promised some *yunkers*; then the order was forgotten.

An attempt was made to recapture the Post Office and the Telegraph Agency; a few shots were fired, and the Government troops announced that they would no longer oppose the Soviets.

To a delegation of *yunkers* Kerensky said, "As chief of the Provisional Government and as Supreme Commander I know nothing, I cannot advise you; but as a veteran revolutionist, I appeal to you, young revolutionists, to remain at your posts and defend the conquests of the Revolution."

Orders of Kishkin, November 7th:

"By decree of the Provisional Government. I am invested with extraordinary powers for the reestablishment of order in Petrograd, in complete command of all civil and military authorities."

"In accordance with the powers conferred upon me by the Provisional Government, I herewith relieve from his functions as Commandant of the Petrograd Military District Colonel George Polkovnikov."

Appeal to the Population signed by Vice-Premier Konovalov, November 7th:

John Reed

“Citizens! Save the fatherland, the republic and your freedom. Maniacs have raised a revolt against the only governmental power chosen by the people, the Provisional Government.

“The members of the Provisional Government fulfil their duty, remain at their post, and continue to work for the good of the fatherland, the reestablishment of order, and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, future sovereign of Russia and of all the Russian peoples.

“Citizens, you must support the Provisional Government. You must strengthen its authority. You must oppose these maniacs, with whom are joined all enemies of liberty and order, and the followers of the Tsarist régime, in order to wreck the Constituent Assembly, destroy the conquests of the Revolution, and the future of our dear fatherland.

“Citizens! Organise around the Provisional Government for the defence of its temporary authority, in the name of order and the happiness of all peoples...”

Proclamation of the Provisional Government.

“The Petrograd Soviet has declared the Provisional Government overthrown, and has demanded that the Governmental power be turned over to it, under threat of bombarding the Winter Palace with the canon of Peter-Paul Fortress, and of the cruiser *Avrora*, anchored in the Neva.

“The Government can surrender its authority only to the Constituent Assembly; for that reason it has decided not to submit, and to demand aid from the population and the Army. A telegram has been sent to the *Stavka*; and an answer received says that a strong detachment of troops is being sent.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“Let the Army and the People reject the irresponsible attempts of the Bolsheviki to create a revolt in the rear.”

About 9 A.M. Kerensky left for the Front.

Toward evening two soldiers on bicycles presented themselves at the Staff Headquarters, as delegates of the garrison of Peter-Paul Fortress. Entering the meeting-room of the Staff, where Kishkin, Rutenburg, Paltchinski, General Bagratouni, Colonel Paradielov and Count Tolstoy were gathered, they demanded the immediate surrender of the Staff; threatening, in case of refusal, to bombard headquarters... After two panicky conferences the Staff retreated to the Winter Palace, and the headquarters were occupied by Red Guards.

Late in the afternoon several Bolshevik armoured cars cruised around the Palace Square, and Soviet soldiers tried unsuccessfully to parley with the *yunkers*.

Firing on the Palace began about 7 o'clock in the evening. At 10 P.M. began an artillery bombardment from three sides, in which most of the shells were blanks, only three small shrapnels striking the facade of the Palace.

^[2]*Kerensky In Flight*: Leaving Petrograd in the morning of November 7th, Kerensky arrived by automobile at Gatchina, where he demanded a special train. Toward evening he was in Ostrov, Province of Pskov. The next morning, extraordinary session of the local Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, with participation of Cossack delegates - there being 6,000 Cossacks at Ostrov.

Kerensky spoke to the assembly, appealing for aid against the Bolsheviki, and addressed himself almost exclusively to the Cossacks. The soldier delegates protested.

“Why did you come here?” shouted voices. Kerensky answered, “To ask the Cossacks' assistance in crushing the Bolshevik insurrection!” At this there were violent protestations, which increased when he continued, “I broke the Kornilov attempt, and I will break the

John Reed

Bolsheviki!" The noise became so great that he had to leave the platform.

The soldier deputies and the Ussuri Cossacks decided to arrest Kerensky, but the Don Cossacks prevented them, and got him away by train... A Military Revolutionary Committee, set up during the day, tried to inform the garrison of Pskov; but the telephone and telegraph lines were cut.

Kerensky did not arrive at Pskov. Revolutionary soldiers had cut the railway line, to prevent troops being sent against the capital. On the night of November 8th he arrived by automobile at Luga, where he was well received by the Death Battalions stationed there.

Next day he took train for the South-West Front, and visited the Army Committee at headquarters. The Fifth Army, however, was wild with enthusiasm over the news of the Bolshevik success, and the Army Committee was unable to promise Kerensky any support.

From there he went to the *Stavka*, at Moghilev, where he ordered ten regiments from different parts of the Front to move against Petrograd. The soldiers almost unanimously refused; and those regiments which did start halted on the way. About five thousand Cossacks finally followed him.

^[3]*Looting Of The Winter Palace*: I do not mean to maintain that there was no looting, in the Winter Palace. Both after and *before* the Winter Palace fell, there was considerable pilfering. The statement of the Socialist Revolutionary paper *Narod*, and of members of the City Duma, to the effect that precious objects to the value of 500,000,000 rubles had been stolen, was, however, a gross exaggeration.

The most important art treasures of the Palace - paintings, statues, tapestries, rare porcelains and armoire, - had been transferred to Moscow during the month of September; and they were still in good order in the basement of the Imperial Palace there ten days after the

Ten Days That Shook the World

capture of the Kremlin by Bolshevik troops. I can personally testify to this.

Individuals, however, especially the general public, which was allowed to circulate freely through the Winter Palace for several days after its capture, made away with table silver, clocks, bedding, mirrors and some odd vases of valuable porcelain and semi-precious stone, to the value of about \$50,000.

The Soviet Government immediately created a special commission, composed of artists and archaeologists, to recover the stolen objects. On November 1st two proclamations were issued:

“CITIZENS OF PETROGRAD!

“We urgently ask all citizens to exert every effort to find whatever possible of the objects stolen from the Winter Palace in the night of November 7-8, and to forward them to the Commandant of the Winter Palace.

“Receivers of stolen goods, antiquarians, and all who are proved to be hiding such objects will be held legally responsible and punished with all severity.

***“Commissars for the Protection of Museums and Artistic
Collections,
G. Yatmanov, B. Mandelbaum”***

“To Regimental And Fleet Committees

“In the night of November 7-8, in the Winter Palace, which is the inalienable property of the Russian people, valuable objects of art were stolen.

John Reed

“We urgently appeal to all to exert every effort, so that the stolen objects are returned to the Winter Palace.

“Commissars...

G. Yatmanov, B. Mandelbaum”

About half the loot was recovered, some of it in the baggage of foreigners leaving Russia.

A conference of artists and archæologists, held at the suggestion of Smolny, appointed a commission of make an inventory of the Winter Palace treasures, which was given complete charge of the Palace and of all artistic collections and State museums in Petrograd. On November 16th the Winter Palace was closed to the public while the inventory was being made.

During the last week in November a decree was issued by the Council of People’s Commissars, changing the name of the Winter Palace to “People’s Museum,” entrusting it to the complete charge of the artistic-archæological commission, and declaring that henceforth all Governmental activities within its wall were prohibited.

^[4]*Rape Of The Women’s Battalion:* Immediately following the taking of the Winter Palace all sorts of sensational stories were published in the anti-Bolshevik press, and told in the City Duma, about the fate of the Women’s Battalion defending the Palace. It was said that some of the girl-soldiers had been thrown from the windows into the street, most of the rest had been violated, and many had committed suicide as a result of the horrors they had gone through.

The City Duma appointed a commission to investigate the matter. On November 16th the commission returned from Levashovo, headquarters of the Women’s Battalion. Madame Tyrkova reported that the girls had been at first taken to the barracks of the Pavlovsky Regiment, and that there some of them had been badly treated; but that at present most of them were at Levashovo, and the rest scattered about the city in private houses. Dr. Mandelbaum, another of the commission, testified drily that *none* of the women had been thrown

Ten Days That Shook the World

out of the windows of the Winter Palace, that *none* were wounded, that three had been violated, and that one had committed suicide, leaving a note which said that she had been “disappointed in her ideals.”

On November 21st the Military Revolutionary Committee officially dissolved the Women’s Battalion, at the request of the girls themselves, who returned to civilian clothes.

In Louise Bryant’s book, **Six Red Months in Russia**, there is an interesting description of the girl-soldiers during this time.

John Reed
Chapter 5 Plunging Ahead

THURSDAY, November 8th. Day broke on a city in the wildest excitement and confusion, a whole nation having up in long hissing swells of storm. Superficially all was quiet; hundreds of thousands of people retired at a prudent hour, got up early, and went to work. In Petrograd the street-cars were running, the stores and restaurants open, theatres going, an exhibition of paintings advertised. All the complex routine of common life—humdrum even in war-time—proceeded as usual. Nothing is so astounding as the vitality of the social organism—how it persists, feeding itself, clothing itself, amusing itself, in the face of the worst calamities.

The air was full of rumours about Kerensky, who was said to have raised the Front, and to be leading a great army against the capital. *Volia Naroda* published a *prikaz* launched by him at Pskov:

The disorders caused by the insane attempt of the Bolsheviki place the country on the verge of a precipice, and demand the effort of our entire will, our courage and the devotion of every one of us, to win through the terrible trial which the fatherland is undergoing.

Until the declaration of the composition of the new Government—if one is formed—every one ought to remain at his post and fulfil his duty toward bleeding Russia. It must be remembered that the least interference with existing Army organisations can bring on irreparable misfortunes, by opening the Front to the enemy. Therefore it is indispensable to preserve at any price the morale of the troops, by assuring complete order and the preservation of the Army from new shocks, and by maintaining absolute confidence between officers and their subordinates. I order all the chiefs and Commissars, in the name of the safety of the country, to stay at their posts, as I myself retain the post of Supreme Commander, until the Provisional Government of the Republic shall declare its will.

In answer, this placard on all the walls:

Ten Days That Shook the World

From The All-Russian Congress Of Soviets

“The ex-Ministers Konovalov, Kishkin, Terestchenko, Maliantovitch, Nikitin and others have been arrested by the Military Revolutionary Committee. Kerensky has fled. All Army organisations are ordered to take every measure for the immediate arrest of Kerensky and his conveyance to Petrograd.

“All assistance given to Kerensky will be punished as a serious crime against the state.”

With brakes released the Military Revolutionary Committee whirled, throwing off orders, appeals, decrees, like sparks. Kornilov was ordered brought to Petrograd. Members of the Peasant Land Committees imprisoned by the Provisional Government were declared free. Capital punishment in the army was abolished. Government employees were ordered to continue their work, and threatened with severe penalties if they refused. All pillage, disorder and speculation were forbidden under pain of death. Temporary Commissars were appointed to the various Ministries: Foreign Affairs, Vuritsky and Trotzky; Interior and Justice, Rykov; Labor, Shliapnikov; Finance, Menzhinsky; Public Welfare, Madame Kollontai; Commerce, Ways and Communications, Riazanov; Navy, the sailor Korbir; Posts and Telegraphs, Spiro; Theatres, Muraviov; State Printing Office, Gherbychev; for the City of Petrograd, Lieutenant Nesterov; for the Northern Front, Pozern.

To the Army, appeal to set up Military Revolutionary Committees. To the railway workers, to maintain order, especially not to delay the transport of food to the cities and the front. In return, they were promised representation in the Ministry of Ways and Communications.

Cossack brothers! (said one proclamation). You are being led against Petrograd. They want to force you into battle with the revolutionary workers and soldiers of the capital. Do not believe a word that is said by our common enemies, the landowners and the capitalists.

John Reed

At our Congress are represented all the conscious organisations of workers, soldiers and peasants of Russia. The Congress wishes also to welcome into its midst the worker-Cossacks. The Generals of the Black Band, henchmen of the land-owners, of Nicolai the Cruel, are our enemies.

They tell you that the Soviets wish to confiscate the lands of the Cossacks. This is a lie. It is only from the great Cossack landlords that the Revolution will confiscate the land to give it to the people.



Organise Soviets of Cossacks' Deputies! Join with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!

Show the Black Band that you are not traitors to the People, and that you do not wish to be cursed by the whole of revolutionary

Russia!—

Cossack brothers, execute no orders of the enemies of the people. Send your delegates to Petrograd to talk it over with us. The Cossacks of the Petrograd garrison, to their honour, have not justified the hope of the People's enemies.

Cossack brothers! The All-Russian Congress of Soviets extends to you a fraternal hand. Long live the brotherhood of the Cossacks with the soldiers, workers and peasants of all Russia!

On the other side, what a storm of proclamations posted up, hand-bills scattered everywhere, newspapers—screaming and cursing and prophesying evil. Now raged the battle of the printing press—all other weapons being in the hands of the Soviets.

Ten Days That Shook the World

First, the appeal of the Committee for Salvation of Country and Revolution, flung broadcast over Russia and Europe:

To The Citizens Of The Russian Republic!

Contrary to the will of the revolutionary masses, on November 7th the Bolsheviki of Petrograd criminally arrested part of the Provisional Government, dispersed the Council of the Republic, and proclaimed an illegal power. Such violence committed against the Government of revolutionary Russia at the moment of its greatest external danger, is an indescribable crime against the fatherland.

The insurrection of the Bolsheviki deals a mortal blow to the cause of national defence, and postpones immeasurably the moment of peace so greatly desired.

Civil war, begun by the Bolsheviki, threatens to deliver the country to the horrors of anarchy and counter-revolution, and cause the failure of the Constituent Assembly, which must affirm the republican régime and transmit to the People forever their right to the land.

Preserving the continuity of the only legal Governmental power, the Committee for Salvation of Country and Revolution, established on the night of November 7th, takes the initiative in forming a new Provisional Government; which, basing itself on the forces of democracy, will conduct the country to the Constituent Assembly and save it from anarchy and counter-revolution. The Committee for Salvation summons you, citizens, to refuse to recognise the power of violence. Do not obey its orders!

Rise for the defence of the country and Revolution!

Support the Committee for Salvation!

Signed by the Council of the Russian Republic, the Municipal Duma of Petrograd, the *Tsay-ee-kah* (First Congress), the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets, and from the Congress itself the Front group, the factions of Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviki,

John Reed
Populist Socialists, Unified Social Democrats, and the group
“Yedinstvo.”

Then posters from the Socialist Revolutionary party, the Menshevik *oborontsi*, Peasants’ Soviets again; from the Central Army Committee, the *Tsentroflot*.



Famine will crush Petrograd! (they cried). The German armies will trample on our liberty. Black Hundred pogroms will spread over Russia, if we all—conscious workers, soldiers, citizens—do not unite.

Do not trust the promises of the Bolsheviks! The promise of immediate peace—is a lie! The promise of bread—a hoax! The promise of land—a fairy tale!—They were all in this manner.

Comrades! You have been basely and cruelly deceived! The seizure of power has been accomplished by the Bolsheviks alone. They concealed their plot from the other Socialist parties composing the Soviet.

You have been promised land and freedom, but the counter-revolution will profit by the anarchy called forth by the Bolsheviks, and will deprive you of land and freedom.

The newspapers were as violent. Our duty (said the *Dielo Naroda*) is to unmask these traitors to the working-class. Our duty is to mobilise all our forces and mount guard over the cause of the Revolution!

Ten Days That Shook the World

Izvestia, for the last time speaking in the name of the old *Tsay-ee-kah*, threatened awful retribution.

As for the Congress of Soviets, we affirm that there has been no Congress of Soviets! We affirm that it was merely a private conference of the Bolshevik faction! And in that case, they have no right to cancel the powers of the *Tsay-ee-kah*.

Novaya Zhizn, while pleading for a new Government that should unite all the Socialist parties, criticised severely the action of the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks in quitting the Congress, and pointed out that the Bolshevik insurrection meant one thing very clearly: that all illusions about coalition with the bourgeoisie were henceforth demonstrated vain.

Rabotchi Put blossomed out as *Pravda*, Lenin's newspaper which had been suppressed in July. It crowed, bristling:

Workers, soldiers, peasants! In March you struck down the tyranny of the clique of nobles. Yesterday you struck down the tyranny of the bourgeois gang.

The first task now is to guard the approaches to Petrograd.

The second is definitely to disarm the counter-revolutionary elements of Petrograd.

The third is definitely to organise the revolutionary power and assure the realisation of the popular programme.

What few Cadet organs appeared, and the bourgeoisie generally, adopted a detached, ironical attitude toward the whole business, a sort of contemptuous "I-told-you-so" to the other parties. Influential Cadets were to be seen hovering around the Municipal Duma, and on the outskirts of the Committee for Salvation. Other than that, the bourgeoisie lay low, biding its hour—which could not far off. That the

John Reed

Bolsheviki would remain in power longer than three days never occurred to anybody—except perhaps to Lenin, Trotzky, the Petrograd workers and the simpler soldiers.



In the high, amphitheatrical Nicolai Hall that afternoon I saw the Duma sitting in *permanence*, tempestuous, grouping around it all the forces of opposition. The old Mayer, Schreider, majestic with his white hair and beard, was describing his visit to Smolny the night before, to protest in the name of the Municipal Self-Government. “The Duma, being the only existing legal Government in the city, elected by equal, direct and secret suffrage, would not recognise the new power,” he had told Trotzky. And Trotzky had answered, “There is a constitutional remedy for that. The Duma can be dissolved and re-elected.” At this report there was a furious outcry.

“If one recognises a Government by bayonet,” continued the old man, addressing the Duma, “well, we have one; but I consider legitimate only a Government recognised by the majority, and not one created by the usurpation of a minority!” Wild applause on all benches except those of the Bolsheviki. Amid renewed tumult the Mayor announced that the Bolsheviki already were violating Municipal autonomy by appointing Commissars in many departments.

Ten Days That Shook the World

The Bolshevik speaker shouted, trying to make himself heard, that the decision of the Congress of Soviets meant that all Russia backed up the action of the Bolsheviks.

"You!" he cried. "You are not the real representative of the people of Petrograd!" Shrieks of "Insult! Insult!" The old Mayor, with dignity, reminded him that the Duma was elected by the freest possible popular vote. "Yes," he answered, "but that was a long time ago—like the *Tsay-ee-kah*—like the Army Committee."

"There has been no new Congress of Soviets!" they yelled at him.

"The Bolshevik faction refuses to remain any longer in this nest of counter-revolution—" Uproar. "—and we demand a re-election of the Duma." Whereupon the Bolsheviks left the chamber, followed by cries of "German agents! Down with the traitors!"

Shingariov, Cadet, then demanded that all Municipal functionaries who had consented to be Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee be discharged from their position and indicted. Schreider was on his feet, putting a motion to the effect that the Duma protested against the menace of the Bolsheviks to dissolve it, and as the legal representative of the population, it would refuse to leave its post.

Outside, the Alexander Hall was crowded for the meeting of the Committee for Salvation, and Skobeliev was again speaking. "Never yet," he said, "was the fate of the Revolution so acute, never yet did the question of the existence of the Russian state excite so much anxiety, never yet did history put so harshly and categorically the question—is Russia to be or not to be! The great hour for the salvation of the Revolution has arrived, and in consciousness thereof we observe the close union of the live forces of the revolutionary democracy, by whose organised will a centre for the salvation of the country and the Revolution has already been created." And much of the same sort. "We shall die sooner than surrender our post!"

John Reed

Amid violent applause it was announced that the Union of Railway Workers had joined the Committee for Salvation. A few moments later the Post and Telegraph Employees came in; then some Mensheviki Internationalists entered the hall, to cheers. The Railway men said they did not recognise the Bolsheviks and had taken the entire railroad apparatus into their own hands, refusing to entrust it to any usurpatory power. The Telegraphers' delegate declared that the operators had flatly refused to work their instruments as long as the Bolshevik Commissar was in the office. The Postmen would not deliver or accept mail at Smolny. All the Smolny telephones were cut off. With great glee it was reported how Uritzky had gone to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to demand the secret treaties, and how Neratov had put him out. The Government employees were all stopping work.

It was war—war deliberately planned, Russian fashion; war by strike and sabotage. As we sat there the chairman read a list of names and assignments; so-and-so was to make the round of the Ministries; another was to visit the banks; some ten or twelve were to work the barracks and persuade the soldiers to remain neutral—"Russian soldiers, do not shed the blood of your brothers!"; a committee was to go and confer with Kerensky; still others were despatched to provincial cities, to form branches of the Committee for Salvation, and link together the anti-Bolshevik elements.

The crowd was in high spirits. "These Bolsheviks *will* try to dictate to the *intelligentzia*? We'll show them!"— Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between this assemblage and the Congress of Soviets. There, great masses of shabby soldiers, grimy workmen, peasants—poor men, bent and scarred in the brute struggle for existence; here the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary leaders—Avksentievs, Dans, Liebers,—the former Socialist Ministers—Skobelievs, Tchernovs,—rubbed shoulders with Cadets like oily Shatsky, sleek Vinaver; with journalists, students, intellectuals of almost all camps. This Duma crowd was well-fed, well-dressed; I did not see more than three proletarians among them all.

Ten Days That Shook the World

News came. Kornilov's faithful *Tekhintsi*^[1] had slaughtered his guards at Bykhov, and he had escaped. Kaledin was marching north. The Soviet of Moscow had set up a Military Revolutionary Committee, and was negotiating with the commandant of the city for possession of the arsenal, so that the workers might be armed.

With these facts was mixed an astounding jumble of rumours, distortions, and plain lies. For instance, an intelligent young Cadet, formerly private secretary to Miliukov and then to Terestchenko, drew us aside and told us all about the taking of the Winter Palace.

"The Bolsheviki were led by German and Austrian officers," he affirmed.

"Is that so?" we replied, politely. "How do you know?"

"A friend of mine was there and saw them."

"How could he tell they were German officers?"

"Oh, because they wore German uniforms!"

There were hundreds of such absurd tales, and they were not only solemnly published by the anti-Bolshevik press, but believed by the most unlikely persons—Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviki who had always been distinguished by their sober devotion to facts.

But more serious were the stories of Bolshevik violence and terrorism. For example, it was said printed that the Red Guards had not only thoroughly looted the Winter Palace, but that they had massacred the *yunkers* after disarming them, had killed some of the Ministers in cold blood; and as for the woman soldiers, most of them had been violated, and many had committed suicide because of the tortures they had gone through. All these stories were swallowed whole by the crowd in the Duma. And worse still, the mothers and fathers of the students and of the women read these frightful details, *often accompanied by*

John Reed

lists of names, and toward nightfall the Duma began to be besieged by frantic citizens.

A typical case is that of Prince Tumanov, whose body, it was announced in many newspapers, had been found floating in the Moika Canal. A few hours later this was denied by the Prince's family, who added that the Prince was under arrest so the press identified the dead man as General Demissov. The General having also come to life, we investigated, and could find no trace of any body found whatever.

As we left the Duma building two boy scouts were distributing handbills^[2] to the enormous crowd which blocked the Nevsky in front of the door—a crowd composed almost entirely of business men, shopkeepers, *tchinouniki*, clerks. One read!

From The Municipal Duma

The Municipal Duma in its meeting of October 26th, in view of the events of the day decrees: To announce the inviolability of private dwellings. Through the House Committees it calls upon the population of the town of Petrograd to meet with decisive repulse all attempts to enter by force private apartments, not stopping at the use of arms, in the interests of the self-defence of citizens.

Up on the corner of the Liteiny, five or six Red Guards and a couple of sailors had surrounded a news-dealer and were demanding that he hand over his copies of the Menshevik *Rabot-chaya Gazeta* (Workers' Gazette). Angrily he shouted at them, shaking his fist, as one of the sailors tore the papers from his stand. An ugly crowd had gathered around, abusing the patrol. One little workman kept explaining doggedly to the people and the news-dealer, over and over again, "It has Kerensky's proclamation in it. It says we killed Russian people. It will make bloodshed."

Smolny was tenser than ever, if that were possible. The same running men in the dark corridors, squads of workers with rifles, leaders with bulging portfolios arguing, explaining, giving orders as they hurried anxiously along, surrounded by friends and lieutenants. Men literally out

Ten Days That Shook the World

of themselves, living prodigies of sleeplessness and work—men unshaven, filthy, with burning eyes, who drove upon their fixed purpose full speed on engines of exaltation. So much they had to do, so much! Take over the Government, organise the City, keep the garrison loyal, fight the Duma and the Committee for Salvation, keep out the Germans, prepare to do battle with Kerensky, inform the provinces what had happened, Propagandise from Archangel to Vladivostok. Government and Municipal employees refusing to obey their Commissars, post and telegraph refusing them communication, railroads roads stonily ignoring their appeals for trains, Kerensky coming, the garrison not altogether to be trusted, the Cossacks waiting to come out. Against them not only the organised bourgeoisie, but all the other Socialist parties except the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, a few Mensheviki Internationalists and the Social Democrat Internationalists, and even they undecided whether to stand by or not. With them, it is true, the workers and the soldier-masses—the peasants an unknown quantity—but after all the Bolsheviks were a political faction not rich in trained and educated men.

Riazanov was coming up the front steps, explaining in a sort of humorous panic that he, Commissar of Commerce, knew nothing whatever of business. In the upstairs cafe sat a man all by himself in the corner, in a goatskin cape and clothes which had been—I was going to say “slept in,” but of course he hadn’t slept—and a three days’ growth of beard. He was anxiously figuring on a dirty envelope, and biting his pencil meanwhile. This was Menzhinsky, Commissar of Finance, whose qualifications were that he had once been clerk in a French bank. And these four half-running down the hall from the office of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and scribbling on bits of paper as they run—these were Commissars despatched to the four corners of Russia to carry the news, argue, or fight—with whatever arguments or weapons came to hand.

The Congress was to meet at one o’clock, and long since the great meeting-hall had filled, but by seven there was yet no sign of the presidium. The Bolshevik and Left Social Revolutionary factions were in session in their own rooms. All the livelong afternoon Lenin and Trotzky had fought against compromise. A considerable part of the Bolsheviks

John Reed

were in favour of giving way so far as to create a joint all-Socialist government. "We can't hold on!" they cried.

"Too much is against us. We haven't got the men. We will be isolated, and the whole thing will fall." So Kameniev, Riazanov and others.

But Lenin, with Trotzky beside him, stood firm as a rock. "Let the compromisers accept our programme and they can come in! We won't give way an inch. If there are comrades here who haven't the courage and the will to dare what we dare, let them leave with the rest of the cowards and conciliators! Backed by the workers and soldiers we shall go on."

At five minutes past seven came word from the left Socialist Revolutionaries to say that they would remain in the Military Revolutionary Committee.

"See!" said Lenin. "They are following!"

A little later, as we sat at the press table in the big hall, an Anarchist who was writing for the bourgeois papers proposed to me that we go and find out what had become of the presidium. There was nobody in the *Tsay-ee-kah* office, nor in the bureau of the Petrograd Soviet. From room to room we wandered, through vast Smolny. Nobody seemed to have the slightest idea where to find the governing body of the Congress. As we went my companion described his ancient revolutionary activities, his long and pleasant exile in France. As for the Bolsheviki, he confided to me that they were common, rude, ignorant persons, without aesthetic sensibilities. He was a real specimen of the Russian *intelligentzia*. So he came at last to Room 17, office of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and stood there in the midst of all the furious coming and going. The door opened, and out shot a squat, flat-faced man in a uniform without insignia, who seemed to be smiling—which smile, after a minute, one saw to be the fixed grin of extreme fatigue. It was Krylenko.

Ten Days That Shook the World

My friend, who was a dapper, civilized-looking young man, gave a cry of pleasure and stepped forward.

“Nicolai Vasilievitch!” he said, holding out his hand. “Don’t you remember me, comrade? We were in prison together.”

Krylenko made an effort and concentrated his mind and sight. “Why yes,” he answered finally, looking the other up and down with an expression of great friendliness. “You are S. *Zdra’stvuitye!*” They kissed. “What are you doing in all this?” He waved his arm around.

“Oh, I’m just looking on. You seem very successful.”

“Yes,” replied Krylenko, with a sort of doggedness, “The proletarian Revolution is a great success.” He laughed. “Perhaps—perhaps, however, we’ll meet in prison again!”

When we got out into the corridor again my friend went on with his explanations. “You see, I’am a follower of Kropotkin. To us the Revolution is a great failure; it has not aroused the patriotism of the masses. Of course that only proves that the people are not ready for Revolution.”

It was just 8:40 when a thundering wave of cheers announced the entrance of the presidium, with Lenin—great Lenin—among them. A short, stocky figure, with a big head set down in his shoulders, bald and bulging. Little eyes, a snobbish nose, wide, generous mouth, and heavy chin; clean-shaven now, but already beginning to bristle with the well-known beard of his past and future. Dressed in shabby clothes, his trousers much too long for him. Unimpressive, to be the idol of a mob, loved and revered as perhaps few leaders in history have been. A strange popular leader—a leader purely by virtue of intellect; colourless, humourless, uncompromising and detached, without picturesque idiosyncrasies—but with the power of explaining profound ideas in simple terms, of analysing a concrete situation. And combined with shrewdness, the greatest intellectual audacity.

John Reed

Kameniev was reading the report of the actions of the Military Revolutionary Committee; abolition of capital punishment in the Army, restoration of the free right of propaganda, release of officers and soldiers arrested for political crimes, orders to arrest Kerensky and confiscation of food supplies in private store-houses. Tremendous applause.

Again the representative of the *Bund*. The uncompromising attitude of the Bolsheviki would mean the crushing of the Revolution; therefore, the *Bund* delegates must refuse any longer to sit in the Congress. Cries from the audience, "We thought you walked out last night! How many times are you going to walk out?"

Then the representative of the Mensheviki Internationalists. Shouts, "What! You're still?" The speaker explained that only part of the Mensheviki Internationalists left the Congress; the rest were going to stay.

"We consider it dangerous and perhaps even mortal for the Revolution to transfer the power to the Soviets"—Interruptions—"but we feel it our duty to remain in the Congress and vote against the transfer here!"

Other speakers followed, apparently without any order. A delegate of the coal-miners of the Don Basin called upon the Congress to take measures against Kaledin, who might cut off coal and food from the capital. Several soldiers just arrived from the Front brought the enthusiastic greetings of their regiments. Now Lenin, gripping the edge of the reading stand, letting his little winking eyes travel over the crowd as he stood there waiting, apparently oblivious to the long-rolling ovation, which lasted several minutes. When it finished, he said simply, "We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order!" Again that overwhelming human roar.

"The first thing is the adoption of practical measures to realise peace. We shall offer peace to the peoples of all the belligerent countries upon the basis of the Soviet terms—no annexations, no

Ten Days That Shook the World

indemnities, and the right of self-determination of peoples. At the same time, according to our promise, we shall publish and repudiate the secret treaties. The question of War and Peace is so clear that I think that I may, without preamble, read the project of a Proclamation to the Peoples of All the Belligerent Countries.”

His great mouth, seeming to smile, opened wide as he spoke; his voice was hoarse—not unpleasantly so, but as if it had hardened that way after years and years of speaking—and went on monotonously, with the effect of being able to go on forever. For emphasis he bent forward slightly. No gestures. And before him, a thousand simple faces looking up in intent adoration.

Proclamation To The Peoples And Governments Of All The Belligerent Nations.

The Workers’ and Peasants’ Government, created by the revolution of November 6th and 7th and based on the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies, proposes to all the belligerent peoples and to their Governments to begin immediately negotiations for a just and democratic peace.

The Government means by a just and democratic peace, which is desired by the immense majority of the workers and the labouring classes, exhausted and depleted by the war—that peace which the Russian workers and peasants, after having struck down the Tsarist monarchy, have not ceased to demand categorically—immediate peace without annexations (that is to say, without conquest of foreign territory, without forcible annexation of other nationalities), and without indemnities.

The Government of Russia Proposes to all the belligerent peoples immediately to conclude such a peace, by showing themselves willing to enter upon the decisive steps of negotiations aiming at such a peace, at

John Reed

once, without the slightest delay, before the definitive ratification of all the conditions of such a peace by the authorised assemblies of the people of all countries and of all nationalities.

By annexation or conquest of foreign territory, the Government means—conformably to the conception of democratic rights in general, and the rights of the working-class in particular—all union to a great and strong State of a small or weak nationality, without the voluntary, clear and precise expression of its consent and desire; whatever be the moment when such an annexation by force was accomplished, whatever be the degree civilisation of the nation annexed by force or maintained outside the frontiers of another State, no matter if that nation be in Europe or in the far countries across the sea.

If any nation is retained by force within the limits of another State; if, in spite of the desire expressed by it, (it matters little if that desire be expressed by the press, by popular meetings, decisions of political parties, or by disorders and riots against national oppression), that nation is not given the right of deciding by free vote—without the slightest constraint, after the complete departure of the armed forces of the nation which has annexed it or wishes to annex it or is stronger in general—the form of its national and political organisation, such a union constitutes an annexation—that is to say, conquest and an act of violence.

To continue this war in order to permit the strong and rich nations to divide among themselves the weak and conquered nationalities is considered by the Government the greatest possible crime against humanity; and the Government solemnly proclaims its decision to sign a treaty of peace which will put an end to this war upon the above conditions, equally fair for all nationalities without exception.

The Government abolishes secret diplomacy, expressing before the whole country its firm decision to conduct all the negotiations in the light of day before the people, and will proceed immediately to the full publication of all secret treaties confirmed or concluded by the

Ten Days That Shook the World

Government of land-owners and capitalists, from March until November 7th, 1917. All the clauses of the secret treaties which, as occur in a majority of cases, have for their object to procure advantages and privileges for Russian capitalists, to maintain or augment the annexations of the Russian imperialists, are denounced by the Government immediately and without discussion.

In proposing to all Governments and all peoples to engage in public negotiations for peace, the Government declares itself ready to carry on these negotiations by telegraph, by post, or by pourparlers between the representatives of the different countries, or at a conference of these representatives. To facilitate these pourparlers, the Government appoints its authorised representatives in the neutral countries.

The Government proposes to all the governments and to the peoples of all the belligerent countries to conclude an immediate armistice, at the same time suggesting that the armistice ought to last three months, during which time it is perfectly possible, not only to hold the necessary pourparlers between the representatives of all the nations and nationalities without exception drawn into the war or forced to take part in it, but also to convoke authorised assemblies of representatives of the people of all countries, for the purpose of the definite acceptance of the conditions of peace.

In addressing this offer of peace to the Governments and to the peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia addresses equally and in particular the conscious workers of the three nations most devoted to humanity and the three most important nations among those taking part in the present war—England, France, and Germany. The workers of these countries have rendered the greatest services to the cause of progress and of Socialism. The splendid examples of the Chartist movement in England, the series of revolutions, of world-wide historical significance, accomplished by the French proletariat—and finally, in Germany, the historic struggle against the Laws of Exception, an example for the workers of the whole world of prolonged and stubborn action, and the

John Reed

creation of the formidable organisations of German proletarians—all these models of proletarian heroism, these monuments of history, are for us a sure guarantee that the workers of these countries will understand the duty imposed upon them to liberate humanity from the horrors and consequences of war; and that these workers, by decisive, energetic and continued action, will help us to bring to a successful conclusion the cause of peace—and at the same time, the cause of the liberation of the exploited working masses from all slavery and all exploitation.

When the grave thunder of applause had died away, Lenin spoke again:

“We propose to the Congress to ratify this declaration. We address ourselves to the Governments as well as to the peoples, for a declaration which would be addressed only to the peoples of the belligerent countries might delay the conclusion of peace. The conditions of peace, drawn up during the armistice, will be ratified by the Constituent Assembly. In fixing the duration of the armistice at three months, we desire to give to the peoples as long a rest as possible after this bloody extermination, and ample time for them to elect their representatives. This proposal of peace will meet with resistance on the part of the imperialist governments—we don’t fool ourselves on that score. But we hope that revolution will soon break out in all the belligerent countries; that is why we address ourselves especially to the workers of France, England and Germany.

“The revolution of November 6th and 7th,” he ended, “has opened the era of the Social Revolution. The labour movement, in the name of peace and Socialism, shall win, and fulfil its destiny.

There was something quiet and powerful in all this, which stirred the souls of men. It was understandable why people believed when Lenin spoke.”

Ten Days That Shook the World

By crowd vote it was quickly decided that only representatives of political factions should be allowed to speak on the motion and that speakers should be limited to fifteen minutes.

First Karelin for the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. "Our faction had no opportunity to propose amendments to the text of the proclamation; it is a private document of the Bolsheviki. But we will vote for it because we agree with its spirit."

For the Social Democrats Internationalists Kramarov, long, stoop-shouldered and near-sighted—destined to achieve some notoriety as the Clown of the Opposition. Only a Government composed of all the Socialist parties, he said, could possess the authority to take such important action. If a Socialist coalition were formed, his faction would support the entire programme; if not, only part of it. As for the proclamation, the Internationalists were in thorough accord with its main points.

Then one after another, amid rising enthusiasm; Ukrainean Social Democracy, support; Lithuanian Social Democracy, support; Populist Socialists, support; Polish Social Democracy, support; Polish Socialists support—but would prefer a Socialist coalition; Lettish Social Democracy, support. Something was kindled in these men. One spoke of the "coming World-Revolution, of which we are the advance-guard"; another of "the new age of brotherhood, when all the peoples will become one great family." An individual member claimed the floor. "There is contradiction here," he said. "First you offer peace without annexations and indemnities, and then you say you will consider all peace offers. To consider means to accept."

Lenin was on his feet. "We want a just peace, but we are not afraid of a revolutionary war. Probably the imperialist Governments will not answer our appeal—but we shall not issue an ultimatum to which it will be easy to say no. If the German proletariat realises that we are ready to consider all offers of peace, that will perhaps be the last drop which overflows the bowl—revolution will break out in Germany.

John Reed

“We consent to examine all conditions of peace, but that doesn’t mean that we shall accept them. For some of our terms we shall fight to the end—but possibly for others will find it impossible to continue the war. Above all, we want to finish the war.”

It was exactly 10:35 when Kameniev asked all in favour of the proclamation to hold up their cards. One delegate dared to raise his hand against, but the sudden sharp outburst around him brought it swiftly down. Unanimous.

Suddenly, by common impulse, we found ourselves on our feet, mumbling together into the smooth lifting unison of the *Internationale*. A grizzled old soldier was sobbing like a child. Alexandra Kollontai rapidly winked the tears back. The immense sound rolled through the hall, burst windows and doors and seared into the quiet sky. “The war is ended! The war is ended!” said a young workman near me, his face shining. And when it was over, as we stood there in a kind of awkward hush, some one in the back of the room shouted, “Comrades! Let us remember those who have died for liberty!” So we began to sing the Funeral March, that slow, melancholy and yet triumphant chant, so Russian and so moving. The *Internationale* is an alien air, after all. The Funeral March seemed the very soul of those dark masses whose delegates sat in this hall, building from their obscure visions a new Russia—and perhaps more.

You fell in the fatal fight

For the liberty of the people, for the honour of the people.

You gave up your lives and everything dear to you,

You suffered in horrible prisons,

You went to exile in chains.

Without a word you carried your chains because you could not ignore your suffering brothers,

Ten Days That Shook the World

Because you believed that justice is stronger than the sword.

The time will come when your surrendered life will count

That time is near; when tyranny falls the people will rise, great and free!

Farewell, brothers, you chose a noble path,

You are followed by the new and fresh army ready to die and to suffer.

Farewell, brothers, you chose a noble path,

At your grave we swear to fight, to work for freedom and the people's happiness.

For this did they lie there, the martyrs of March, in their cold Brotherhood Grave on Mars Field; for this thousands and tens of thousands had died in the prisons, in exile, in Siberian mines. It had not come as they expected it would come, nor as the *intelligentzia* desired it; but it had come—rough, strong, impatient of formulas, contemptuous of sentimentalism; real.

Lenin was reading the Decree on Land:

(1) All private ownership of land is abolished immediately without compensation.

(2) All land_owners' estates, and all lands belonging to the Crown, to monasteries, church lands with all their live stock and inventoried property, buildings and all appurtenances, are transferred to the disposition of the township Land Committees and the district Soviets of Peasants' Deputies until the Constituent Assembly meets.

John Reed

(3) Any damage whatever done to the confiscated property which from now on belongs to the whole People, is regarded as a serious crime, punishable by the revolutionary tribunals. The district Soviets of Peasants' Deputies shall take all necessary measures for the observance of the strictest order during the taking over of the land-owners' estates, for the determination of the dimensions of the plots of land and which of them are subject to confiscation, for the drawing up of an inventory of the entire confiscated property, and for the strictest revolutionary protection of all the farming property on the land, with all buildings, implements, cattle, supplies of products, etc., passing into the hands of the People.

(4) For guidance during the realisation of the great land reforms until their final resolution by the Constituent Assembly, shall serve the following peasant *nakaz*^[3] (instructions), drawn up on the basis of 242 local peasant *nakazi* by the editorial board of the "Izvestia of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies," and published in No.88 of said "Izvestia" (Petrograd, No.88, August 19th, 1917).

The lands of peasants and of Cossacks serving in the Army shall not be confiscated.

"This is not," explained Lenin, "the project of former Minister Tchernov, who spoke of 'erecting a framework' and tried to realise reforms from above. From below, on the spot, will be decided the questions of division of the land. The amount of land received by each peasant will vary according to the locality.

"Under the Provisional Government, the *pomieshtchiki* flatly refused to obey the orders of the Land Committees—those Land Committees projected by Lvov, brought into existence by Shingariov, and administered by Kerensky!"

Before the debates could begin a man forced his way violently through the crowd in the aisle and climbed upon the platform. It was Pianikh, member of the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets, and he was mad clean through.

Ten Days That Shook the World

“The Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets of Peasants’ Deputies protests against the arrest of our comrades, the Ministers Salazkin and Mazlov!” he flung harshly in the faces of the crowd, “We demand their instant release! They are now in Peter-Paul fortress. We must have immediate action! There is not a moment to lose!”

Another followed him, a soldier with disordered beard and flaming eyes. “You sit here and talk about giving the land to the peasants, and you commit an act of tyrants and usurpers against the peasants’ chosen representatives! I tell you—” he raised his fist, “If one hair of their heads is harmed, you’ll have a revolt on your hands!” The crowd stirred confusedly.

Then up rose Trotzky, calm and venomous, conscious of power, greeted with a roar. “Yesterday the Military Revolutionary Committee decided to release the Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik Ministers, Mazlov, Salazkin, Gvozдов and Maliantovitch—on principle. That they are still in Peter-Paul is only because we have had so much to do. They will, however, be detained at their homes under arrest until we have investigated their complicity in the treacherous acts of Kerensky during the Kornilov affair!”

“Never,” shouted Pianikh, “in any revolution have such things been seen as go on here!”

“You are mistaken,” responded Trotzky. “Such things have been seen even in this revolution. Hundreds of our comrades were arrested in the July days. When Comrade Kollontai was released from prison by the doctor’s orders, Avksentiev placed at her door two former agents of the Tsar’s secret police!” The peasants withdrew, muttering, followed by ironical hoots.

The representative of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries spoke on the Land Decree. While agreeing in principle, his faction could not vote

John Reed

on the question until after discussion. The Peasants' Soviets should be consulted.

The Menshevik Internationalists, too, insisted on a party caucus.

Then the leader of the Maximalists, the Anarchist wing of the peasants: "We must do honour to a political party which puts such an act into effect the first day, without jawing about it!"

A typical peasant was in the tribune, long hair, boots and sheepskin coat, bowing to all corners of the hall. "I wish you well, comrades and citizens," he said. "There are some Cadets walking around outside. You arrested our Socialist peasants—why not arrest them?"

This was the signal for a debate of excited peasants. It was precisely like the debate of soldiers of the night before. Here were the real proletarians of the land.

"Those members of our Executive Committee, Avksentiev and the rest, whom we thought were the peasants' protectors—they are only Cadets too! Arrest them! Arrest them!"

Another, "Who are these Pianikhs, these Avksentievs? They are not peasants at all! They only wag their tails!"

How the crowd rose to them, recognising brothers!

The Left Socialist Revolutionaries proposed a half-hour intermission. As the delegates streamed out, Lenin stood up in his place.

"We must not lose time, comrades! News all-important to Russia must be on the press tomorrow morning. No delay!"

And above the hot discussion, argument, shuffling of feet could be heard the voice of an emissary of the Military Revolutionary

Ten Days That Shook the World

Committee, crying, "Fifteen agitators wanted in room 17 at once! To go to the Front!" help.

It was almost two hours and a half later that the delegates came straggling back, the presidium mounted the platform, and the session commenced by the reading of telegrams from regiment after regiment, announcing their adhesion to the Military Revolutionary Committee.

In leisurely manner the meeting gathered momentum. A delegate from the Russian troops on the Macedonian front spoke bitterly of their situation. "We suffer there more from the friendship of our 'Allies' than from the enemy," he said. Representatives of the Tenth and Twelfth Armies, just arrived in hot haste, reported, "We support you with all our strength!" A peasant-soldier protested against the release of "the traitor Socialists, Mazlov and Salazkin"; as for the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets, it should be arrested *en masse*! Here was real revolutionary talk. A deputy from the Russian Army in Persia declared he was instructed to demand all power to the Soviets. A Ukrainian officer, speaking in his native tongue: "There is no nationalism in this crisis. *Da zdravstvuyet* the proletarian dictatorship of all lands!" Such a deluge of high and hot thoughts that surely Russia would never again be dumb!

Kameniev remarked that the anti-Bolshevik forces were trying to stir up disorders everywhere, and read an appeal of the Congress to all the Soviets of Russia:

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, including some Peasants' Deputies, calls upon the local Soviets to take immediate energetic measures to oppose all counter-revolutionary anti-Jewish action and all *pogroms*, whatever they may be. The honour of the Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Revolution demands that no *pogrom* be tolerated.

The Red Guard of Petrograd, the revolutionary garrison and the sailors have maintained complete order in the capital.

John Reed

Workers, soldiers and peasants, you should follow everywhere the example of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd.

Comrade soldiers and Cossacks, on us falls the duty of assuring real revolutionary order.

All revolutionary Russia and the entire world have their eyes on us.

At two o'clock the Land Decree was put to vote, with only one against and the peasant delegates wild with joy. So plunged the Bolsheviks ahead, irresistible, overriding hesitation and opposition—the only people in Russia who had a definite programme of action while the others talked for eight long months.

Now arose a soldier, gaunt, ragged and eloquent, to protest against the clause of the *nakaz* tending to deprive military deserters from a share in village land allotments. Bawled at and hissed at first, his simple, moving speech finally made silence. “Forced against his will into the butchery of the trenches,” he cried, “which you yourselves, in the Peace decree, have voted senseless as well as horrible, he greeted the Revolution with hope of peace and freedom. Peace? The Government of Kerensky forced him again to go forward into Galicia to slaughter and be slaughtered; to his pleas for peace, Terestchenko simply laughed. Freedom? Under Kerensky he found his Committees suppressed, his newspapers cut off, his party speakers put in prison. At home in his village, the landlords were defying his Land Committees, jailing his comrades. In Petrograd the bourgeoisie, in alliance with the Germans, were sabotaging the food and ammunition for the Army. He was without boots, or clothes. Who forced him to desert? The Government of Kerensky, which you have overthrown!” At the end there was applause.

But another soldier hotly denounced it: “The Government of Kerensky is not a screen behind which can be hidden dirty work like desertion! Deserters are scoundrels, who run away home and leave their comrades to die in the trenches alone! Every deserter is a traitor, and

Ten Days That Shook the World

should be punished.” Uproar, shouts of “*Do volno! Teesche!*” Kameniev hastily proposed to leave the matter to the Government for decision.^[4]

At 2:30 A. M. fell a tense hush. Kameniev was reading the decree of the Constitution of Power:

Until the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, a provisional Workers’ and Peasants’ Government is formed, which shall be named the Council of People’s Commissars.

The administration of the different branches of state activity shall be entrusted to commissions, whose composition shall be regulated to ensure the carrying out of the programme of the Congress, in close union with the mass-organisations of working-men, working-women, sailors, soldiers, peasants and clerical employees. The governmental power is vested in a *collegium* made up of the chairmen of these commissions, that is to say, the Council of People’s Commissars.^[5]

Control over the activities of the People’s Commissars, and the right to replace them, shall belong to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers’, Peasants’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, and its Central Executive Committee.

Still silence; as he read the list of Commissars, bursts of applause after each name, Lenin’s and Trotzky’s especially.

President of the Council: Vladimir Ulianov (Lenin)

Interior: A. E. Rykov

Agriculture: V. P. Miliutin

Labour: A. G. Shliapnikov

Military and Naval Affairs—a committee composed of V. A. Avseenko (Antonov), N. V. Krylenko, and F. M. Dybenko.

Commerce and Industry: V. P. Nogin

Popular Education: A. V. Lunatcharsky

Finance: E. E. Skvortsov (Stepanov)

Foreign Affairs: L. D. Bronstein (Trotzky)

Justice: G. E. Oppokov (Lomov)

Supplies: E. A. Teodorovitch

John Reed

Post and Telegraph: N. P. Avilov (*Gliebov*)

Chairman for Nationalities: I. V. Djougashvili (*Stalin*)

Railroads: To be filled later.

There were bayonets at the edges of the room, bayonets pricking up among the delegates; the Military Revolutionary Committee was arming everybody, Bolshevism was arming for the decisive battle with Kerensky, the sound of whose trumpets came up the south-west wind. In the meanwhile nobody went home; on the contrary hundreds of newcomers filtered in, filling the great room solid with stern-faced soldiers and workmen who stood for hours and hours, indefatigably intent. The air was thick with cigarette smoke, and human breathing, and the smell of coarse clothes and sweat.

Avilov of the staff of *Novaya Zhizn* was speaking in the name of the Social Democrat Internationalists and the remnant of the Menshevik Internationalists; Avilov, with his young, intelligent face, looking out of place in his smart frock-coat.

“We must ask ourselves where we are going. The ease with which the Coalition Government was upset cannot be explained by the strength of the left wing of the democracy, but only by the incapacity of the Government to give the people peace and bread. And the left wing cannot maintain itself in power unless it can solve these questions.

“Can it give bread to the people? Grain is scarce. The majority of the peasants will not be with you, for you cannot give them the machinery they need. Fuel and other primary necessities are almost impossible to procure.

“As for peace, that will be even more difficult. The allies refused to talk with Skobeliev. They will never accept the proposition of a peace conference from *you*. You will not be recognised either in London and Paris, or in Berlin.

“You cannot count on the effective help of the proletariat of the Allied countries, because in most countries it is very far from the

Ten Days That Shook the World

revolutionary struggle; remember, the Allied democracy was unable even to convoke the Stockholm Conference. Concerning the German Social Democrats, I have just talked with Comrade Goldenberg, one of our delegates to Stockholm; he was told by the representatives of the Extreme Left that revolution in Germany was impossible during the war.” Here interruptions began to come thick and fast, but Avilov kept on.

“The isolation of Russia will fatally result either in the defeat of the Russian Army by the Germans, and the patching up of a peace between the Austro-German coalition and the Franco-British coalition *at the expense of Russia*—or in a separate peace with Germany.

“I have just learned that the Allied ambassadors are preparing to leave, and that Committees for Salvation of Country and Revolution are forming in all the cities of Russia.

“No one party can conquer these enormous difficulties. The majority of the people, supporting a government of Socialist coalition, can alone accomplish the Revolution.

“He then read the resolution of the two factions:

Recognising that for the salvation of the conquests of the Revolution it is indispensable immediately to constitute a government based on the revolutionary democracy organised in the Soviets of Workers,’ Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies, recognising moreover that the task of this government is the quickest possible attainment of peace, the transfer of the land into the hands of the agrarian committees, the organisation of control over industrial production, and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly on the date decided, the Congress appoints an executive committee to constitute such a government after an agreement with the groups of the democracy which are taking part in the Congress.

In spite of the revolutionary exaltation of the triumphant crowd, Avilov’s cool tolerant reasoning had shaken them. Toward the end, the

John Reed

cries and hisses died away, and when he finished there was even some clapping.

Karelin followed him—also young, fearless, whose sincerity no one doubted—for the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, the party of Maria Spiridonova, the party which almost alone followed the Bolsheviki, and which represented the revolutionary peasants.

“Our party has refused to enter the Council of People’s Commissars because we do not wish forever to separate ourselves from the part of the revolutionary army which left the Congress, a separation which would make it impossible for us to serve as intermediaries between the Bolsheviki and the other groups of the democracy. And that is our principal duty at this moment. We cannot sustain any government except a government of Socialist coalition.



The Russian Duma in possession of the Committee of Workers and Soldiers deputies after the Revolution

“We protest, moreover, against the tyrannical conduct of the Bolsheviki. Our Commissars have been driven from their posts. Our only organ,

Znamia Truda (Banner of Labour), was forbidden to appear yesterday.

“The Central Duma is forming a powerful Committee for Salvation of Country and Revolution, to fight you. Already you are isolated, and your Government is without the support of a single other democratic group.

And now Trotzky stood upon the raised tribune, confident and dominating, with that sarcastic expression about his mouth which was

Ten Days That Shook the World

almost a sneer. He spoke, in a ringing voice, and the great crowd rose to him.

“These considerations on the dangers of isolation of our party are not new. On the eve of insurrection our fatal defeat was also predicted. Everybody was against us; only a faction of the Socialist Revolutionaries of the left was with us in the Military Revolutionary Committee. How is it that we were able to overturn the Government almost without bloodshed?. That fact is the most striking proof that we *were not isolated*. In reality the Provisional Government was isolated; the democratic parties which march against us were isolated, are isolated, and forever cut off from the proletariat!

“They speak of the necessity for a coalition. There is only one coalition possible—the coalition of the workers, soldiers and poorest peasants; and it is our party’s honour to have realised that coalition. What sort of coalition did Avilov mean? A coalition with those who supported the Government of Treason to the People? Coalition doesn’t always add to strength. For example, could we have organised the insurrection with Dan and Avksentiev in our ranks?” Roars of laughter.

“Avksentiev gave little bread. Will a coalition with the *oborontsi* furnish more? Between the peasants and Avksentiev, who ordered the arrest of the Land Committees, we choose the peasants! Our Revolution will remain the classic revolution of history.

“They accuse us of repelling an agreement with the other democratic parties. But is it we who are to blame? Or must we, as Karelin put it, blame it on a ‘misunderstanding’? No, comrades. When a party in full tide of revolution, still wreathed in powder-smoke, comes to say, ‘Here is the Power—take it!’—and when those to whom it is offered go over to the enemy, that is not a misunderstanding. that is a declaration of pitiless war. And it isn’t we who have declared war.

“Avilov menaces us with failure of our peace efforts—if we remain ‘isolated.’ I repeat, I don’t see how a coalition with Skobeliev, or even Terestchenko, can help us to get peace! Avilov tries to frighten

John Reed

us by the threat of a peace at our expense. And I answer that in any case, if Europe continues to be ruled by the imperialist bourgeoisie, revolutionary Russia will inevitably be lost.

“There are only two alternatives; either the Russian Revolution will create a revolutionary movement in Europe, or the European powers will destroy the Russian Revolution!”

They greeted him with an immense crusading acclaim, kindling to the daring of it, with the thought of championing mankind. And from that moment there was something conscious and decided about the insurrectionary masses, in all their actions, which never left them.

But on the other side, too, battle was taking form. Kameniev recognised a delegate from the Union of Railway Workers, a hardfaced, stocky man with an attitude of implacable hostility. He threw a bombshell.

“In the name of the strongest organisation in Russia I demand the right to speak, and I say to you: the *Vikzhel* charges me to make known the decision of the Union concerning the constitution of Power. The Central Committee refuses absolutely to support the Bolsheviki if they persist in isolating themselves from the whole democracy of Russia!” Immense tumult all over the hall.

“In 1905, and in the Kornilov days, the Railway Workers were the best defenders of the Revolution. But you did not invite us to your Congress—” Cries, “It was the old *Tsay-ee-kah* which did not invite you!” The orator paid no attention. “We do not recognise the legality of this Congress; since the departure of the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries there is not a legal quorum. The Union supports the old *Tsay-ee-Kah*, and declares that the Congress has no right to elect a new Committee.

“The Power should be a Socialist and revolutionary Power, responsible before the authorised organs of the entire revolutionary democracy. Until the constitution of such a power, the Union of Railway

Ten Days That Shook the World

Workers, which refuses to transport counter-revolutionary troops to Petrograd, at the same time forbids the execution of any order whatever without the consent of the *Vikzhel*. The *Vikzhel* also takes into its hands the entire administration of the railroads of Russia.”

At the end he could hardly be heard for the furious storm of abuse which beat upon him. But it was a heavy blow—that could be seen in the concern on the faces of the presidium. Kameniev, however, merely answered that there could be no doubt of the legality of the Congress, as even the quorum established by the old *Tsay-ee-Kah* was exceeded—in spite of the secession of the Mensheviki and Socialist Revolution arises.

Then came the vote on the Constitution of Power, which carried the Council of People’s Commissars into office by an enormous majority.

The election of the new *Tsay-ee-kah*, the new parliament of the Russian Republic, took barely fifteen minutes. Trotzky announced its composition: 100 members, of which 70 Bolsheviki. As for the peasants, and the seceding factions, places were to be reserved for them. “We welcome into the Government all parties and groups which will adopt our programme,” ended Trotzky.

And thereupon the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was dissolved, so that the members might hurry to their homes in the four corners of Russia and tell of the great happenings.

It was almost seven when we woke the sleeping conductors and motor-men of the street-cars which the Street-Railway Workers’ Union always kept waiting at Smolny to take the Soviet delegates to their homes. In the crowded car there was less happy hilarity than the night before, I thought. Many looked anxious; perhaps they were saying to themselves, “Now we are masters, how can we do our will?”

John Reed

At our apartment-house we were held up in the dark by an armed patrol of citizens and carefully examined. The Duma's proclamation was doing its work.

The landlady heard us come in, and stumbled out in a pink silk wrapper.

The House Committee has again asked that you take your turn on guard-duty with the rest of the men," she said.

"What's the reason for this guard-duty?"

"To protect the house and the women and children."

"Who from?"

"Robbers and murderers."

"But suppose there came a Commissar from the Military Revolutionary Committee to search for arms?"

"Oh, that's what they'll say they are. And besides, what's the difference?"

I solemnly affirmed that the Consul had forbidden all American citizens to carry arms—especially in the neighbourhood of the Russian *intelligentsia*.

Footnotes

^[1] *Appeals And Proclamations*

From the Military Revolutionary Committee, November 8:

"To All Army Committees and All Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies.

"The Petrograd garrison has overturned the Government of Kerensky, which had risen against the Revolution and the People. In

Ten Days That Shook the World

sending this news to the Front and the country, the Military Revolutionary Committee requests all soldiers to keep vigilant watch on the conduct of officers. Officers who do not frankly and openly declare for the Revolution should be immediately arrested as enemies.

“The Petrograd Soviet interprets the programme of the new Government as: immediate proposals of a general democratic peace, the immediate transfer of great landed estates to the peasants, and the honest convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The people’s revolutionary Army must not permit troops of doubtful morale to be sent to Petrograd. Act by means of arguments, by means of moral suasion—but if that fails, halt the movement of troops by implacable force.

“The present order must be immediately read to all military units of every branch of the service. Whoever keeps the knowledge of this order from the soldier-masses commits a serious crime against the Revolution, and will be punished with all the rigour of revolutionary law.

“Soldiers! For peace, bread, land, and popular government!”

“To All Front and Rear Army, Corps, Divisional, Regimental and Company Committees, and All Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies.

“Soldiers and Revolutionary Officers!

“The Military Revolutionary Committee, by agreement with the majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants, has decreed that General Kornilov and all the accomplices of his conspiracy shall be brought immediately to Petrograd, for incarceration in Peter-Paul Fortress and arraignment before a military revolutionary court-martial.

“All who resist the execution of this decree are declared by the Committee to be traitors to the Revolution, and their orders are herewith declared null and void.”

John Reed

The Military Revolutionary Committee

Attached to the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

"To all Provincial and District Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

"By resolution of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, all arrested members of Land Committees are immediately set free. The Commissars who arrested them are to be arrested.

"From this moment all power belongs to the Soviets. The Commissars of the Provisional Government are removed. The presidents of the various local Soviets are invited to enter into direct relations with the revolutionary Government."

Military Revolutionary Committee.

[2] *Protest Of The Municipal Duma* "The Central City Duma, elected on the most democratic principles, has undertaken the burden of managing Municipal affairs and food supplies at the time of the greatest disorganisation. At the present moment the Bolshevik party, three weeks before the elections to the Constituent Assembly, and in spite of the menace of the external enemy, having removed by armed force the only legal revolutionary authority, is making an attempt against the rights and independence of the Municipal Self-Government, demanding submission to its Commissars and its illegal authority.

"In this terrible and tragic moment the Petrograd City Duma, in the face of its constituents, and of all Russia, declares loudly that it will not submit to any encroachments on its rights and its independence, and will remain at the post of responsibility to which it has been called by the will of the population of the capital.

"The Central City Duma of Petrograd appeals to all Dumas and Zemstvos of the Russian Republic to rally to the defence of one of the

Ten Days That Shook the World

greatest conquests of the Russian Revolution—the independence and inviolability of popular self-government.”

[3] *Land Decree—Peasants’ “Nakaz”* The Land question can only be permanently settled by the general Constituent Assembly.

The most equitable solution of the Land question should be as follows:

1. The right of private ownership of land is abolished forever; land cannot be sold, nor leased, nor mortgaged, nor alienated in any way. All dominical lands, lands attached to titles, lands belonging to the Emperor’s cabinet, to monasteries, churches, possession lands, entailed lands, private estates, communal lands, peasant free-holds, and others, are confiscated without compensation, and become national property, and are placed at the disposition of the workers who cultivate them.

Those who are damaged because of this social transformation of the rights of property are entitled to public aid during the time necessary for them to adapt themselves to the new conditions of existence.

2. All the riches beneath the earth—ores, oil, coal, salt, etc.—as well as forests and waters having a national importance, become the exclusive property of the State. All minor streams, lakes and forests are placed in the hands of the communities, on condition of being managed by the local organs of government.

3. All plots of land scientifically cultivated—gardens, plantations, nurseries, seed-plots, green-houses, and others—shall not be divided, but transformed into model farms, and pass into the hands of the State or of the community, according to their size and importance.

Buildings, communal lands and villages with their private gardens and their orchards remain in the hands of their present owners; the dimensions of these plots and the rate of taxes for their use shall be fixed by law.

4. All studs, governmental and private cattle-breeding and bird-breeding establishments, and others, are confiscated and become

John Reed

national property, and are transferred either to the State or to the community, according to their size and importance.

All questions of compensation for the above are within the competence of the Constituent Assembly.

5. All inventoried agricultural property of the confiscated lands, machinery and live-stock, are transferred without compensation to the State or the community, according to their quantity and importance.

The confiscation of such machinery or live-stock shall not apply to the small properties of peasants.

6. The right to use the land is granted to all citizens, without distinction of sex, who wish to work the land themselves, with the help of their families, or in partnership, and only so long as they are able to work. No hired labour is permitted.

In the event of the incapacity for work of a member of the commune for a period of two years, the commune shall be bound to render him assistance during this time by working his land in common.

Farmers who through old age or sickness have permanently lost the capacity to work the land themselves, shall surrender their land and receive instead a Government pension.

7. The use of the land should be equalised—that is to say, the land shall be divided among the workers according to local conditions, the unit of labour and the needs of the individual.

The way in which land is to be used may be individually determined upon: as homesteads, as farms, by communes, by partnerships, as will be decided by the villages and settlements.

8. All land upon its confiscation is pooled in the general People's Land Fund. Its distribution among the workers is carried out by the local and central organs of administration, beginning with the village democratic organisations and ending with the central provincial institutions—with the exception of urban and rural cooperative societies.

Ten Days That Shook the World

The Land Fund is subject to periodical redistribution according to the increase of population and the development of productivity and rural economy.

In case of modification of the boundaries of allotments, the original centre of the allotment remains intact.

The lands of persons retiring from the community return to the Land Fund; providing that near relatives of the persons retiring, or friends designated by them, shall have preference in the redistribution of these lands.

When lands are returned to the Land Fund, the money expended for manuring or improving the land, which has not been exhausted, shall be reimbursed.

If in some localities the Land Fund is insufficient to satisfy the local population, the surplus population should emigrate.

The organisation of the emigration, also the costs thereof, and the providing of emigrants with the necessary machinery and live-stock, shall be the business of the State.

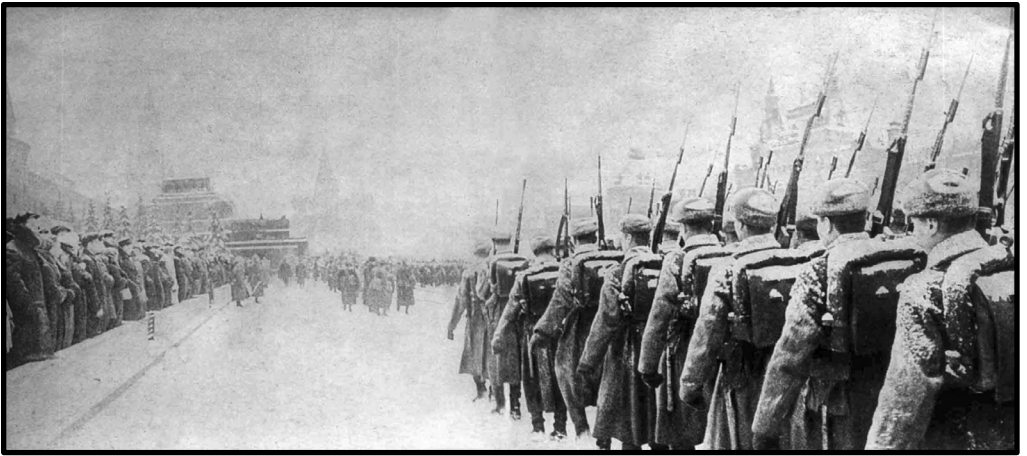
The emigration shall be carried out in the following order: first, the peasants without land who express their wish to emigrate; then the undesirable members of the community, deserters, etc., and finally, by drawing lots on agreement.

All which is contained in this *nakaz*, being the expression of the indisputable will of the great majority of conscious peasants of Russia, is declared to be a temporary law, and until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, becomes effective immediately so far as is possible, and in some parts of it gradually, as will be determined by the District Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

John Reed

[4] *The Land And Deserters* The Government was not forced to make any decision concerning the rights of deserters to the land. The end of the war and the demobilisation of the army automatically removed the deserter problem.

[5] *The Council Of People'S Commissars* The Council of People's Commissars was at first composed entirely of Bolsheviki. This was not entirely the fault of the Bolsheviki, however. On November 8th they offered portfolios to members of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, who declined.



1941 October Revolution Parade: Infantry with SVT-40 self-loading rifles

Ten Days That Shook the World



The centennial of the Russian Revolution is a fitting time for Marxists and other radicals to reflect on the what still stands as the historical high point.



The Emancipation of Women in Russia before and after the Russian Revolution

John Reed



Ten Days That Shook the World

John Reed Biography

John Reed, (born Oct. 22, 1887, Portland, Ore., U.S.—died Oct. 19, 1920, Moscow), U.S. poet-adventurer whose short life as a revolutionary writer and activist made him the hero of a generation of radical intellectuals. He married the writer and feminist Louise Bryant in 1916. Reed died of typhus in Russia in 1920. He is one of three Americans honored by being buried in the Kremlin Wall Necropolis (the others are labor organizer Bill Haywood and Charles Ruthenburg, founder of the Communist Party USA).

Reed, a member of a wealthy Portland family, was graduated from Harvard in 1910 and began writing for a Socialist newspaper, *The Masses*, in 1913. In 1914 he covered the revolutionary fighting in Mexico and recorded his impressions in *Insurgent Mexico* (1914). Frequently arrested for organizing and defending strikes, he rapidly became established as a radical leader and helped form the Communist Party in the United States.

He covered World War I for *Metropolitan* magazine; out of this experience came *The War in Eastern Europe* (1916). He became a close friend of Lenin and was an eyewitness to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, recording this event in his best known book, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919).



When the U.S. Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party split in 1919, Reed became the leader of the latter. Indicted for treason, he escaped to the Soviet Union and died of typhus; he was subsequently buried with other Bolshevik heroes beside the Kremlin wall. Following his death the Communist Party formed many John Reed clubs, associations of writers and artists, in U.S. cities.

John Silas Reed was born on October 22, 1887, in the mansion of his maternal grandparents in Portland, Oregon. It was located in the current neighborhood of Goose Hollow. His grandmother's household had

John Reed

Chinese servants. Reed wrote of paying a nickel to a "Goose Hollowite" (young toughs in a gang in the working-class neighborhood below King's Hill) to keep from being beaten up. In 2001 a memorial bench dedicated to John Reed was installed in Washington Park, which overlooks the site of Reed's birthplace. (The mansion no longer stands.)

His mother, Margaret (Green) Reed, was the daughter of Portland industrialist Henry Dodge Green, who had made a fortune through founding and operating three businesses: the first gas & light company, the first pig iron smelter on the West Coast, and the Portland water works (he was the second owner of this). SW Green Avenue was named in his honor.

John's father, Charles Jerome Reed, was born in the East and had come to Portland as the representative of an agricultural machinery manufacturer. With his ready wit, he quickly won acceptance in Portland's business community. The couple had married in 1886, and the family's wealth came from the Green side, not the Reed side.

A sickly child, young "Jack" grew up surrounded by nurses and servants. His mother carefully selected his upper-class playmates. He had a brother, Harry, who was two years younger. Jack and his brother were sent to the recently established Portland Academy, a private school. Jack was bright enough to pass his courses but could not be bothered to work for top marks, as he found school dry and tedious. In September 1904, Jack was sent to Morristown School in New Jersey to prepare for college. His father, who did not attend college, wanted his sons to go to Harvard. At this prep school, Jack continued his track record of poor classroom performance. He made the football team and showed some literary promise.

Reed failed in his first attempt on the admission exam but passed on his second try. In the fall of 1906, he entered Harvard College. Tall, handsome, and light-hearted, he threw himself into all manner of student activities. He was a member of the cheerleading team, the swimming team, and the dramatic club. He served on the editorial boards of the *Lampoon* and *The Harvard Monthly*, and as president of the Harvard Glee Club. In 1910 he held a position in the Hasty Pudding Theatricals, and also wrote music and lyrics for their show *Diana's Debut*. Reed failed to make the Harvard teams for football and crew, but excelled in other sports: swimming and water polo. He was also made "Ivy orator and poet" in his senior year of college.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Reed attended meetings of the Socialist Club, over which his friend Walter Lippmann presided, but he never joined. The club influenced him. The group had social legislation introduced into the state legislature, attacked the university for failing to pay its servants living wages, and petitioned the administration for the establishment of a course in Socialism. Reed later recalled:

All this made no ostensible difference in the look of Harvard society, and probably the club-men and the athletes, who represented us to the world, never even heard of it. But it made me, and many others, realize that there was something going on in the dull outside world more thrilling than college activities, and turned our attention to the writings of men like H.G. Wells and Graham Wallas, wrenching us away from the Oscar Wildian dilettantism which had possessed undergraduate litterateurs for generations.

Reed graduated from Harvard College in 1910. That summer he set out to see more of the "dull outside world," visiting England, France, and Spain before returning home to America the following spring. Reed chose to work as a common laborer on a cattle boat to pay for his fare to Europe. Reed's traveling was encouraged by his favorite professor, Charles Townsend Copeland or "Copey", who told him he must "see life" if he wanted to successfully write about it.

Journalist

John Reed had determined to become a journalist, and he set out to make his mark in New York, a center of the industry. Reed made use of a valuable contact from Harvard, Lincoln Steffens, who was establishing a reputation as a muckraker. He appreciated Reed's skills and intellect at an early date. Steffens landed his young admirer an entry-level position on The American Magazine, where he read manuscripts, corrected proofs, and later helped with the composition. Reed supplemented his insufficient salary by taking an additional job as the business manager of a new short-lived quarterly magazine called Landscape Architecture.



Reed made his home in Greenwich Village, a burgeoning hub of poets, writers, activists, and artists. He came to love New York, relentlessly

John Reed

exploring it and writing poems about it. His formal jobs on the magazines paid the rent, but it was as a freelance journalist that Reed sought to establish himself. He collected rejection slips, circulating an essay and short stories about his six months in Europe, eventually breaking through in *The Saturday Evening Post*. Within a year, Reed had other work accepted by *Collier's*, *The Forum*, and *The Century Magazine*. One of his poems was set to music by composer Arthur Foote. The editors at *The American* came to see him as a contributor and began to publish his work.

Reed's serious interest in social problems was first aroused about this time by Steffens and Ida Tarbell. He moved beyond them to a more radical political position than theirs. In 1913 he joined the staff of *The Masses*, edited by Max Eastman. Reed contributed more than 50 articles, reviews, and shorter pieces to this socialist publication.

The first of Reed's many arrests came in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1913, for attempting to speak on behalf of strikers in the New Jersey silk mills. The harsh treatment meted out by the authorities to the strikers and the short jail term he served further radicalized Reed. He allied with the syndicalist trade union, the Industrial Workers of the World. His account of his experiences were published in June as an article, "War in Paterson." During the same year, following a suggestion made by IWW leader Bill Haywood, Reed put on "The Pageant of the Paterson Strike" in Madison Square Garden as a benefit for the strikers.

In the autumn of 1913, Reed was sent to Mexico by the *Metropolitan Magazine* to report the Mexican Revolution. He shared the perils of Pancho Villa's army for four months and was with Villa's Constitutional (Constitutionalist) Army (whose "Primer Jefe" political chief was Venustiano Carranza) when it defeated Federal forces at Torreón, opening the way for its advance on Mexico City. Reed adored Villa, but felt cold about Carranza.

Reed's reporting on the Villistas in a series of outstanding magazine articles gained him a national reputation as a war correspondent. Reed deeply sympathized with the peons and vehemently opposed American intervention; US forces occupied Veracruz. Reed's reports collected and published as the book *Insurgent Mexico* (1914).

On April 30, 1914, Reed arrived in Colorado, scene of the recent Ludlow massacre, a result of owners suppression of labor organizing.

Ten Days That Shook the World

There he spent a little more than a week. During this time he investigated the events, spoke on behalf of the miners, and wrote an impassioned article on the subject ("The Colorado War", published in July). He came to believe much more deeply in class conflict.

That summer he spent in Provincetown, Massachusetts with Mabel Dodge and her son, putting together *Insurgent Mexico* and interviewing President Wilson on the subject. The resulting report, much watered down at White House insistence, was not a success.

War correspondent

On August 14, 1914, shortly after Germany declared war on France, Reed set sail for neutral Italy, on assignment for the *Metropolitan*. He met his lover Mabel Dodge in Naples, and the pair made their way to Paris. Reed believed the war was the result of imperialist commercial rivalries and felt little sympathy for any of the parties.

In an unsigned piece entitled "The Traders' War," published in the September 1914 issue of *The Masses*, Reed wrote:

The real War, of which this sudden outburst of death and destruction is only an incident, began long ago. It has been raging for tens of years, but its battles have been so little advertised that they have been hardly noted. It is a clash of Traders

What has democracy to do in alliance with Nicholas, the Tsar? Is it Liberalism which is marching from the Petersburg of Father Gapon, from the Odessa of the pogroms?...

No. There is a falling out among commercial rivals.

We, who are Socialists, must hope — we may even expect — that out of this horror of bloodshed and dire destruction will come far-reaching social changes — and a long step forward towards our goal of Peace among Men.



John Reed

But we must not be duped by this editorial buncombe about Liberalism going forth to Holy War against Tyranny.

This is not Our War

In France, Reed was frustrated by wartime censorship and the difficulty of getting to reach the front. Reed and Dodge went to London, and Dodge soon left for New York, to Reed's relief. The rest of 1914 he spent drinking with French prostitutes and pursuing an affair with a German woman. The pair went to Berlin in early December. While there, Reed interviewed Karl Liebknecht, one of the few socialists in Germany to vote against war credits. Reed was deeply disappointed by the general collapse in working-class solidarity promised by the Second International, and by its replacement with militarism and nationalism.

He returned to New York in December and wrote more about the war. In 1915 he traveled to Central Europe, accompanied by Boardman Robinson, a Canadian artist and frequent Masses contributor. Traveling from Thessaloniki, they saw scenes of profound devastation in Serbia (including a bombed-out Belgrade), also going through Bulgaria and Romania. They passed through the Jewish Pale of Settlement in Bessarabia. In Chelm they were arrested, incarcerated for several weeks and at risk of being shot for espionage but were saved by the interest of the American ambassador.



Traveling to Russia, Reed was outraged to learn that the American ambassador in Petrograd was inclined to believe they were spies. Reed and Robinson were rearrested when they tried to slip into Romania. This time the British ambassador (Robinson being a British subject) finally secured permission for them to leave, but not until after all their papers were seized in Kiev. In Bucharest, the duo spent time piecing together more of their journey. At one point Reed traveled to Constantinople in hopes of seeing action at Gallipoli. From these experiences he

Ten Days That Shook the World

wrote the book, *The War in Eastern Europe*, published in April 1916.

After returning to New York, Reed visited his mother in Portland. There he met and fell in love with Louise Bryant, who joined him on the East coast in January 1916. Though happy, both also had affairs with others, in accord with their bohemian circle and ideas about sexual liberation of their day. Early in 1916 Reed met the young playwright Eugene O'Neill. Beginning that May, the three rented a cottage in Provincetown, Massachusetts, a summer destination on Cape Cod for many artists and writers from Greenwich Village. Not long after, Bryant and O'Neill began a romance.

That summer Reed covered the Presidential nominating conventions. Reed endorsed Woodrow Wilson, believing that he would make good on his promise to keep America out of the war. In November 1916 he married Bryant in Peekskill, New York. In the same year, he underwent an operation at Johns Hopkins Hospital to remove a kidney. He was hospitalized until mid-December. The operation rendered him ineligible for conscription and saved him from registering as a conscientious objector, which had been his intention. During 1916 he privately published *Tamburlaine and Other Verses*, in an edition of 500 copies.

As the country raced towards war, the radical Reed was marginalized: his relationship with the Metropolitan was over. He pawned his late father's watch and sold his Cape Cod cottage to Margaret Sanger, known as a birth control activist and sex educator.

When Wilson asked for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917, Reed shouted at a hastily convened meeting of the People's Council in Washington: "This is not my war, and I will not support it. This is not my war, and I will have nothing to do with it." In July and August Reed continued to write vehement articles against the war for *The Masses*, which the United States Postal Service refused to mail, and for *Seven Arts*. Due to critical anti-war articles by Reed and Randolph Bourne, the arts magazine lost its financial backing and ceased publication. Reed was stunned by the nation's pro-war fervor, and his career lay in ruins.

Witness to the Russian Revolution

On August 17, 1917, Reed and Bryant set sail from New York to Europe, having first provided the State Department with legally sworn assurances that neither would represent the Socialist Party at a forthcoming conference in Stockholm. The pair were going as working

John Reed

journalists to report on the sensational developments taking place in the fledgling republic of Russia. Traveling by way of Finland, the pair arrived in the capital city of Petrograd immediately after the failed military coup of monarchist General Lavr Kornilov. This was an attempt to topple the Provisional Government of Alexander Kerensky by force of arms. Reed and Bryant found the Russian economy in shambles. Several of the subject nations of the old empire, such as Finland and Ukraine, had gained autonomy and were seeking separate military accommodations with Germany. Reed and Bryant were in Petrograd for the October Revolution, in which the Bolshevik Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, headed by Vladimir Lenin, toppled the Kerensky government; the Bolsheviks believed this was the first blow of a worldwide socialist revolution. Food shortages made the situation dire in the capital, and social disorder reigned. Reed later recalled:

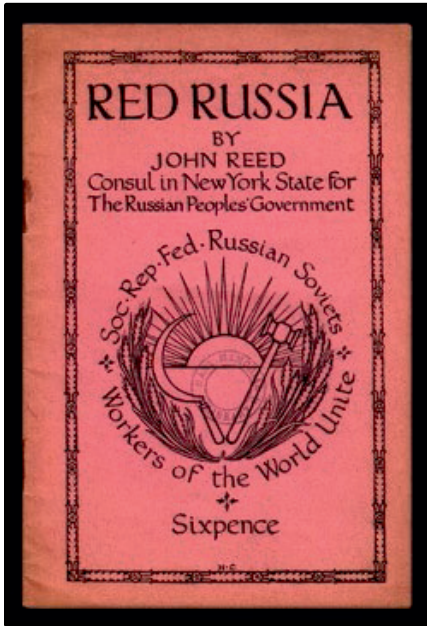
The last month of the Kerensky regime was marked first by the falling off of the bread supply from 2 pounds a day to 1 pound, to half a pound, to a quarter of a pound, and, the final week, no bread at all. Holdups and crime increased to such an extent that you could hardly walk down the streets. The papers were full of it. Not only had the government broken down, but the municipal government had absolutely broken down. The city militia was quite disorganized and up in the air, and the street-cleaning apparatus and all that sort of thing had broken down — milk and everything of that sort. A mood for radical change was in the air. The Bolsheviks, seeking an all-socialist government and immediate end to Russian participation in the war, sought the transfer of power from Kerensky to a Congress of Soviets, a gathering of elected workers' and soldiers' deputies to be convened in October. The Kerensky government considered this a kind of coup, and moved to shut down the Bolshevik press. It issued warrants of arrest for the Soviet leaders and prepared to transfer the troops of the Petrograd garrison, believed to be unreliable, back to the front. A Military Revolutionary Committee of the Soviets, dominated by the Bolshevik Party, determined to seize power on behalf of the future Congress of Soviets. At 11 pm on the evening of November 7, 1917, it captured the Winter Palace, the seat of Kerensky's government. Reed and Bryant were present during the fall of the Winter Palace, the symbolic event that started the Bolshevik Revolution.

Reed was an enthusiastic supporter of the new revolutionary socialist government. He went to work for the new People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, translating decrees and news of the new government into English. "I also collaborated in the gathering of

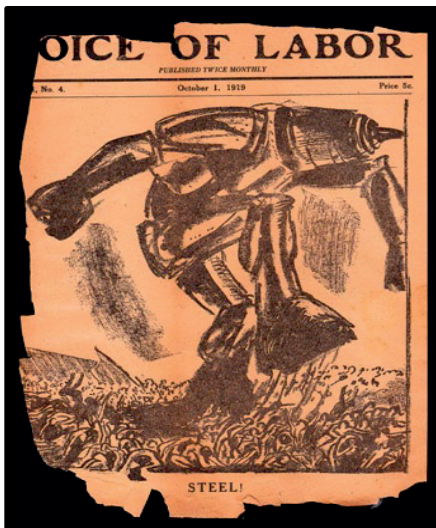
Ten Days That Shook the World

material and data and distributing of papers to go into the German trenches," Reed later recalled.

Reed was close to the inner circle of the new government. He met Leon Trotsky and was introduced to Lenin during a break of the Constituent Assembly on January 18, 1918. By December, his funds were nearly exhausted, and he took a job with American Raymond Robins of the International Red Cross. Robins wanted to set up a newspaper promoting American interests; Reed complied. But in the dummy issue he prepared, he included a warning beneath the masthead: "This paper is devoted to promoting the interests of American capital."



The cover of this 1919 British pamphlet emphasizes Reed's short-lived status as Soviet consul.



The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly left Reed unmoved. Two days later, armed with a rifle, he joined a patrol of Red Guards prepared to defend the Foreign Office from counter-revolutionary attack. Reed attended the opening of the Third Congress of Soviets, where he gave a short speech promising to bring the news of the revolution to America, saying he hoped it would "call forth an answer from America's oppressed and exploited masses." American journalist Edgar Sisson told Reed that he was being used by the Bolsheviks for their propaganda, a rebuke he accepted.

John Reed

In January, Trotsky, responding to Reed's concern about the safety of his substantial archive, offered Reed the post of Soviet Consul in New York. As the United States did not recognize the Bolshevik government, Reed's credentials would almost certainly have been rejected and he would have faced prison. (This would have given the Bolsheviks some propaganda material). Most Americans in Petrograd considered the appointment of Reed a massive blunder. Businessman Alexander Gumberg met with Lenin, showing him a prospectus in which Reed called for massive American capital support for Russia and for setting up a newspaper to express the American viewpoint on the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. Lenin found the proposal unsavory and withdrew Reed's nomination for Reed. Learning of Gumberg's intervention, Reed always denigrated him afterward.

Both Reed and Bryant wrote and published books from their Russian experiences. Bryant's *Six Red Months in Russia* appeared first, but Reed's *10 Days That Shook the World* (1919), garnered more notice.

Bryant returned to the United States in January 1918, but Reed did not reach New York City until April 28. On his way back to the US, Reed traveled from Russia to Finland; he did not have a visa or passport while crossing to Finland. In Turku harbor, when Reed was boarding a ship on his way to Stockholm, Finnish police arrested Reed; he was held at Kakola prison in Turku until he was released. From Finland, Reed traveled to Kristiania, Norway via Stockholm.

Because he remained under indictment in the *Masses* case, Reed was immediately met by federal authority when his ship reached New York. They held him on board for more than eight hours while they searched his belongings. Reed's papers, the raw material from which he intended to write his book, were seized. He was released upon his own recognizance after his attorney, Morris Hillquit, promised to make him available at the Federal Building the next day. His papers were not returned to him until November.

Radical political activist

Back in America, Reed and Bryant defended the Bolsheviks and opposed the American intervention. The public was incensed at Russia's departure from the war against Germany, gave him a generally cold reception. While he was in Russia, his articles in *The Masses*, particularly one headlined, "Knit a straight-jacket for your soldier boy", had been largely instrumental in the government gaining an indictment for sedition against that magazine. (Under strict laws,

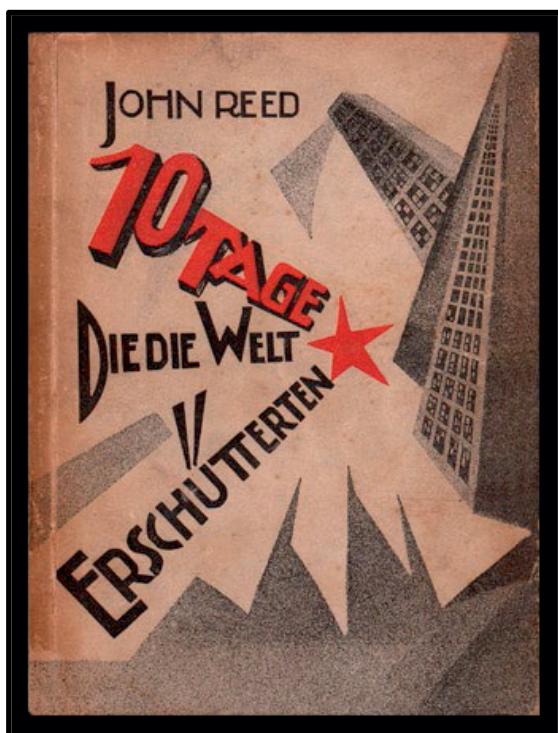
Ten Days That Shook the World

anti-war agitation was considered to be grounds for sedition and treason.)

The first Masses trial ended in a hung jury the day before Reed reached New York. The defendants, including him, were to be retried. He immediately posted \$2,000 bail on April 29.

The second Masses trial also ended in a hung jury.

In Philadelphia, Reed stood outside a closed hall on May 31, and harangued a crowd of 1,000 about the case and the war until police dragged him away. He was charged with inciting a riot, and posted \$5,000 bail to be released from jail. Reed became more aggressively political, intolerant, and self-destructive. On September 14, he was arrested for the third time since returning from Russia, charged with violating the Sedition Act and freed on \$5,000 bail. This was a day after possibly the largest demonstration for Bolshevik Russia was held in the United States (in The Bronx). Reed had passionately defended the revolution, which he seemed to think was coming to America as well. He tried to prevent Allied intervention in Russia. He argued that the Russians were contributing to the war effort by checking German ambitions in the Ukraine and Japanese designs on Siberia, but this argument came to naught.



On February 21-22, 1919, Bryant was fiercely grilled before a Senate committee exploring Bolshevik propaganda activities in the US, but emerged resilient. Reed followed her. According to Homberger, his testimony was "savagely distorted" by the press. Later that day Reed went to Philadelphia to stand trial for his May speech; despite a hostile judge, press, and patriotic speech by the prosecutor,

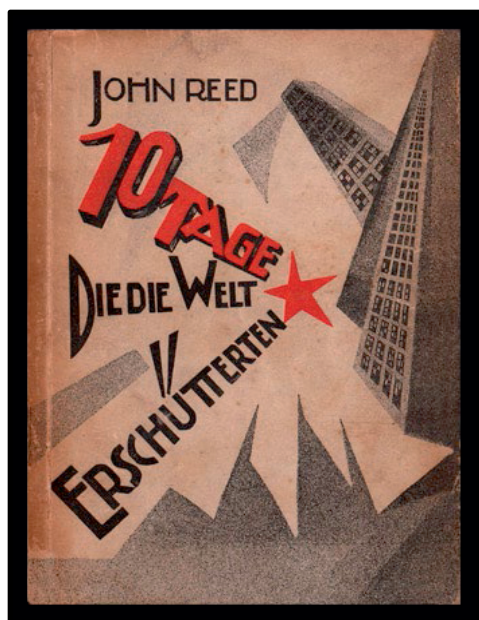
John Reed

Reed's lawyer convinced the jury the case was about free speech, and he was acquitted. Returning to New York, Reed continued speaking widely and participating in the various twists of socialist politics that year. He served as editor of *The New York Communist*, the weekly newspaper issued by the Left Wing Section of Greater New York.

Affiliated with the Left Wing of the Socialist Party, Reed with the other radicals was expelled from the National Socialist Convention in Chicago on August 30, 1919. The radicals split into two bitterly hostile groups, forming the Communist Labor Party of America (Reed's group, which he helped create) and, the next day, the Communist Party of America. Reed was the international delegate of the former, wrote its manifesto and platform, edited its paper, *The Voice of Labor*, and was denounced as "Jack the Liar" in the Communist Party organ, *The Communist*. Reed's writings of 1919 displayed doubts about Western-style democracy and defended the dictatorship of the proletariat. He believed this was a necessary step that would prefigure the true democracy "based upon equality and the liberty of the individual."

Comintern functionary Indicted for sedition and hoping to secure Comintern backing for the CLP, Reed fled from America with a forged passport in early October 1919 on a Scandinavian frigate; he worked his way to Bergen as a stoker. Given shore leave, he disappeared to Kristiania, crossed into Sweden on October 22, passed through Finland and made his way to Moscow by train. In the cold winter of 1919-20, he traveled in the region around Moscow, observing factories, communes, and villages. He filled notebooks with his writing and had an affair with a Russian woman. Reed's feelings about the revolution became ambivalent. Activist Emma Goldman had recently arrived aboard the *Buford*, among hundreds of aliens deported by the United States under the Sedition Act. She was especially concerned about the Cheka. Reed told her that the enemies of the revolution deserved their fate, but suggested that she see Angelica Balabanoff, a critic of the current situation. He wanted Goldman to hear the other side.

Ten Days That Shook the World



German edition of 10 Days That Shook The World, published by the Comintern in Hamburg in 1922

Though facing the threat of arrest in Illinois, Reed tried to return to the United States in February 1920. At that time, the Soviets organized a convention to establish a United Communist Party of America. Reed attempted to leave Russia through Latvia, but his train never arrived, forcing him to hitch a ride in the boxcar of an eastbound military train to Petrograd. In March, he crossed into Helsinki, where he had radical friends, including Hella Wuolijoki, the future politician and SDKL

member of parliament. With their help, he was hidden in the hold of a freighter.

On the 13th, customs officials in Finland found Reed in a coal bunker on the ship. He was taken to the police station, where he maintained that he was seaman "Jim Gormley". Eventually, the jewels, photographs, letters, and fake documents he had in his possession forced him to reveal his true identity. Although beaten several times and threatened with torture, he refused to surrender the names of his local contacts. Because of his silence, he could not be tried for treason. He was charged and convicted of smuggling and having jewels in his possession (102 small diamonds worth \$14,000, which were confiscated).

The US Secretary of State was satisfied with Reed's arrest and pressured the Finns for his papers. American authorities, however, remained indifferent to Reed's fate. Although Reed paid the fine for smuggling, he was still detained illegally. His physical condition and state of mind deteriorated rapidly. He suffered from depression and insomnia, wrote alarming letters to Bryant, and on May 18 threatened a hunger strike. He was finally released in early June, and sailed for Tallinn, Estonia, on the 5th. Two days later, he traveled to Petrograd,

John Reed

recuperating from malnutrition and scurvy caused by having been fed dried fish almost exclusively. His spirits were high.

At the end of June, Reed traveled to Moscow. After he discussed with Bryant the possibility of her joining him, she gained passage on a Swedish tramp steamer and arrived in Gothenburg on August 10. At the same time, Reed attended the second Comintern congress. Although his mood was as jovial and boisterous as ever, his physical appearance had deteriorated.

During this congress, Reed bitterly objected to the deference other revolutionaries showed to the Russians. The latter believed the tide of revolutionary fervor was ebbing, and that the Communist party needed to work within the existing institutions - a policy Reed felt would be disastrous. He was contemptuous of the bullying tactics displayed during the congress by Karl Radek and Grigory Zinoviev, who ordered Reed to attend the Congress of the Peoples of the East to be held at Baku on August 15.

The journey to Baku was a long one, five days by train through countryside that was devastated by civil war and infected by typhus. Reed was reluctant to go. He asked for permission to travel later, as he wanted to meet Bryant in Petrograd after she arrived from Murmansk. Zinoviev insisted that Reed take the official train: "the Comintern has made a decision. Obey." Reed, needing Soviet goodwill and unprepared for a final break with the Comintern, made the trip with reluctance. Years after having abandoned Communism himself, his friend Benjamin Gitlow asserted that Reed became bitterly disillusioned with the Communist movement because of his treatment by Zinoviev.

During his time in Baku, Reed received a telegram announcing Bryant's arrival in Moscow. He followed her there, arriving on September 15, and was able to tell her of the events of the preceding eight months. He appeared older and his clothes were in tatters. While in Moscow, he took her to meet Lenin, Trotsky, Lev Kamenev, and other leading Bolsheviks, and also to visit Moscow's ballet and art galleries.

Ten Days That Shook the World

Death

Reed's body lying in state in Moscow



Reed was determined to return to the United States but fell ill on September 25. At first thought to have influenza, he was hospitalized five days later. He was diagnosed with spotted typhus. Bryant spent all her time with him, but there were no medicines to be obtained because of the Allied blockade. His mind started to wander, and then he lost the use of the right

side of his body and could no longer speak. His wife was holding his hand when he died in Moscow on October 17, 1920. After a hero's funeral, his body was buried at the Kremlin Wall Necropolis. He is one of three Americans honored by being buried there.



Legacy

The interpretation of Reed in popular culture has been varied. Some[who?] have dismissed him as a "romantic revolutionary" and a "playboy", a vapid dilettante pretending to profess revolutionary sensibilities. For the Communist movement to which he belonged, Reed became a symbol of the international nature of the Bolshevik revolution, a martyr buried at the Kremlin wall amidst solemn fanfare, his name to be uttered reverently as a member of the radical pantheon. Others, such as his old friend and comrade Benjamin Gitlow, claimed that Reed had begun to shun the bureaucracy and violence of Soviet Communism late in his life. They sought to posthumously enlist Reed in their own anti-communist cause.

John Reed



People's School
for
Marxist-Leninist
Studies



Enroll Now!
www.psmls.org



**PEOPLE'S SCHOOL OF
MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES**
Agitate, Educate, Organize

Ten Days That Shook the World



A New Beginning for U.S. Communists, Founded May Day 2014



Program



Points of Unity

PCUSA 1st Congress

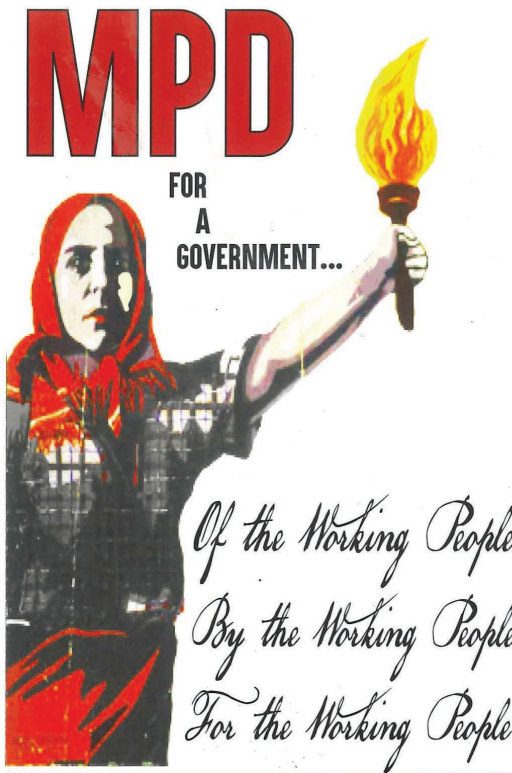


Constitution

<https://partyofcommunistsusa.org>



John Reed
MOVEMENT FOR PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY



PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

To unite all democratic minded, peace loving people in the USA into a national united front against fascism and war.

To provide a people's response to state sponsored terrorism and violence in our communities.

To demand an agenda for social justice

To fight corruption

To demand accountability and transparency from our elected representatives.

To bring corporate domination of our economy to an end.

To establish people's' councils in every community with authority to enforce laws that protect the people from abuse of authority.

www.movement4peoplesdemocracy.org

Ten Days That Shook the World



Our Mission

The aim of all Friends of the Soviet People is international cooperation in building socialism and solidarity with the anti-imperialist forces of the world who are struggling against U.S. Imperialism - the main enemy of humanity.

Our History

U.S. Friends of the Soviet People is the successor to the National Council of American - Soviet Friendship (NCASF) Started in 1918 as "Hands Off Russia" Committees.

usfriendsofthesovietpeople.org
Email: angelo4ny@aol.com
(718) 979-6563



www.usfriendsofthesovietpeople.org

John Reed

North American Region



Post Office Box 1641, Manhattanville Station, New York, NY 10027 *E-mail: joseph@labortoday.us

Labor Today is published by the **Labor United for Class Struggle (LUCS)**, a nationwide caucus of union and non-represented workers. Our mission is to unite the working class to fight against the power of transnational capital. Currently only 11% of the U.S. workforce is organized into unions. Most of these workers are employed in the public sector, and are legally denied the right to strike. The most militant of these workers are the postal workers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. For this reason, they are under attack. However, they are not the only ones.

The attacks on the public sector and its workforce are part of a larger plan developed years ago by Milton Friedman and the University of Chicago School of Business. The plan is referred to as neoliberalism and its main feature is austerity. Reducing the number of federal, state, and municipal employees and cutting pensions and Social Security are the first part of the plan which President Ronald Reagan called "starving the beast". Under this plan, all government services are virtually eliminated with the exception of the military, and the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative Branches of government. This is also called Social Darwinism, or survival of the fittest.

Our mission with Labor Today and the LUCS caucus is to unite all of Labor, to give them a voice regardless of industry or type of work without regard to status: union or unrepresented. We provide assistance to the Walmart workers, the Fight for \$15 and a union and other efforts. We are transnational and we support the mission and policies of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

<http://www.labortoday.us>

Ten Days That Shook the World



The **League of Young Communists USA** is the Communist Youth Organization of the Party of Communists USA.

The Party of Communists USA traces its roots from dropped clubs of the Communist Party USA. Members of the New York Transport Workers Union club, the Arts & Entertainment CPUSA club, the Staten Island club, the Buffalo NY club, the Los Angeles club and various comrades scattered around the country, such as in California, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota and Texas, were the original founders of the Party of Communists USA. The PCUSA and the LYCUSA are dedicated to upholding Marxism-Leninism, scientific socialism, internationalism and Socialism-Communism. Our focus is on class struggle, workers' rights, and creating the conditions for a socialist revolution. The PCUSA established the League of Young Communists USA as the successor to the Young Communist League of the CPUSA, which was officially disbanded in 2015. The YCL had been in existence for almost one hundred years.

<http://www.leagueofyoungcommunistsusa.org>

